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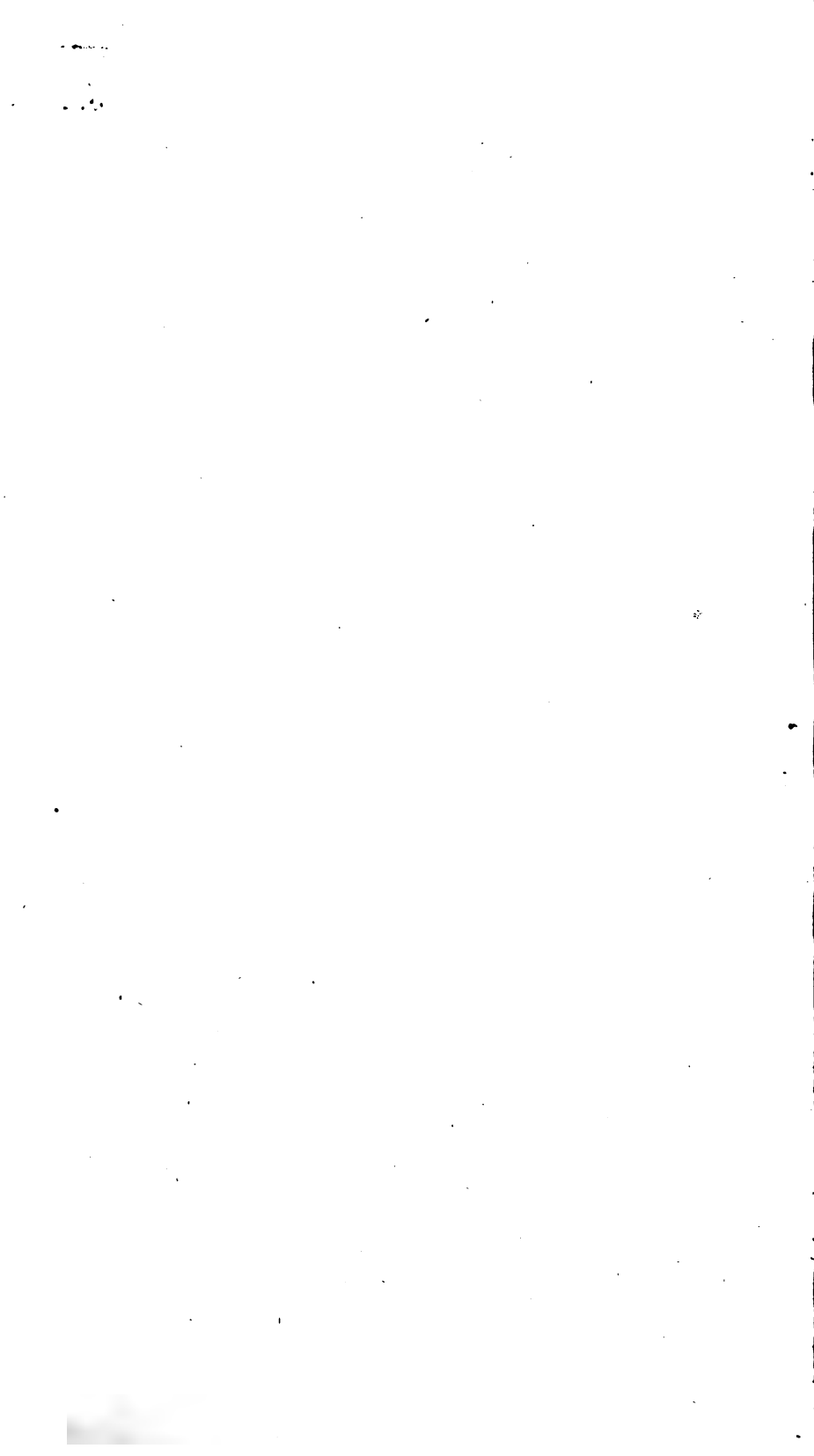
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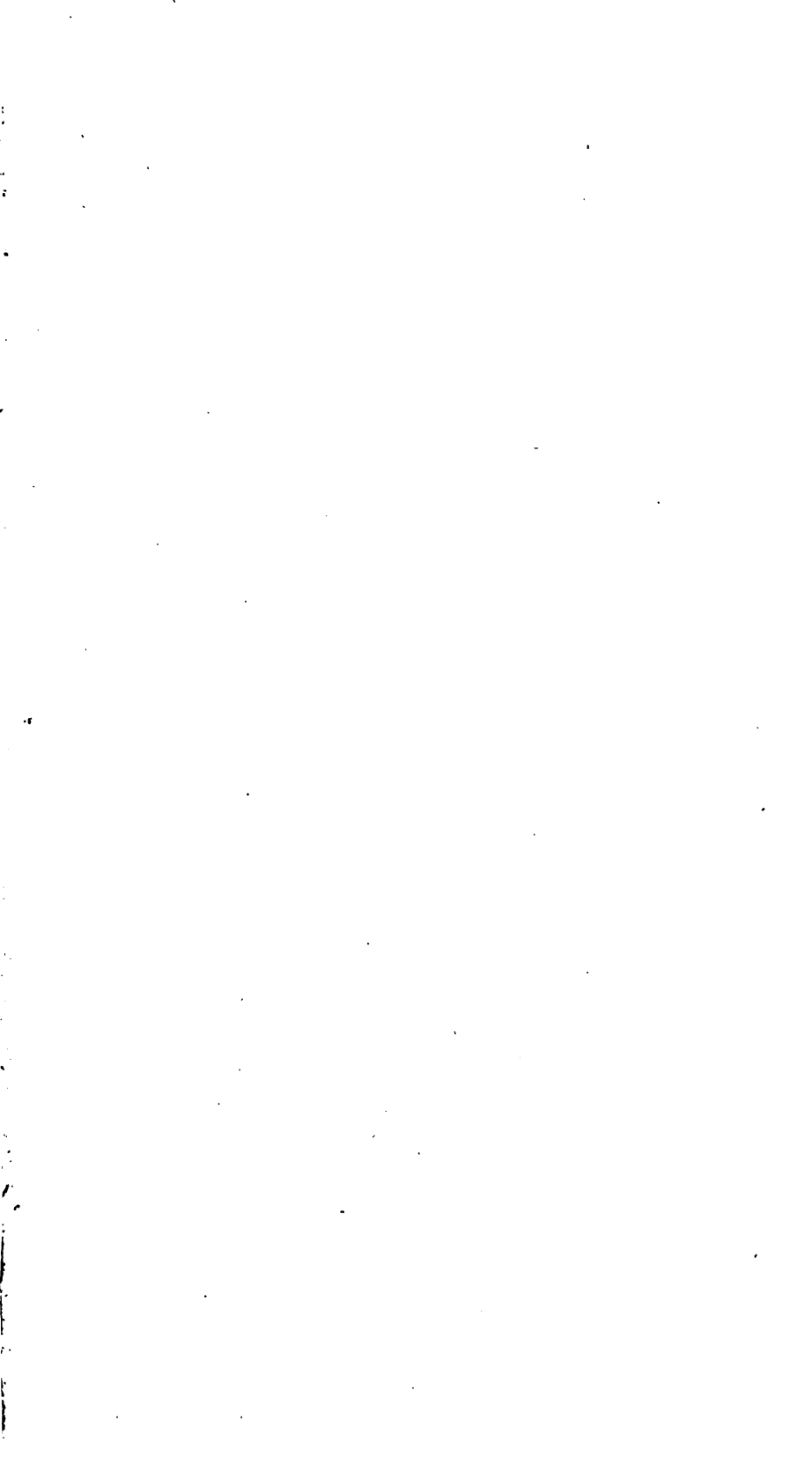
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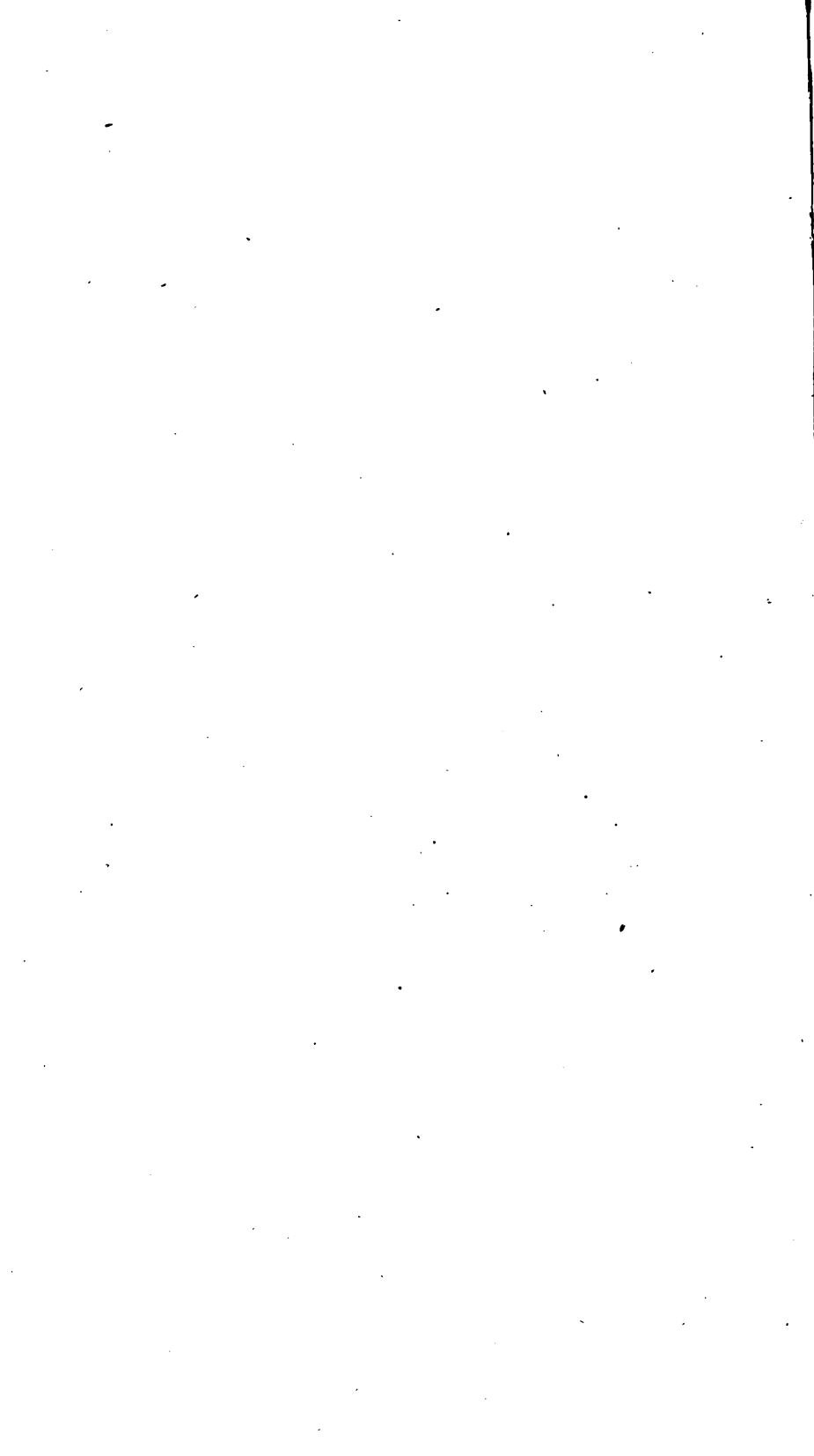


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# ADDRESSES

BY

**REV. JESSE APPLETON, D. D.**

LATE PRESIDENT OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL COMMENCEMENTS,

FROM 1808 TO 1818 ;

WITH A

SKETCH OF HIS CHARACTER.

BRUNSWICK :

JOSEPH GRIFFIN.....PRINTER.

1820.



## MAINE DISTRICT.

**BE IT REMEMBERED,** That on the twenty-fourth day of (L. S.) April, A. D. 1820, in the forty fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, **JOSEPH GRIFFIN**, of the Maine District has deposited in this office, the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit;

**"ADDRESSES BY REV. JESSE APPLETON, D. D. LATE PRESIDENT OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE. DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL COMMENCEMENTS FROM 1808 TO 1818; WITH A SKETCH OF HIS CHARACTER."**

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned." And also to an Act, entitled "An Act, supplementary to an Act, entitled an Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical, and other prints."

**JOHN MUSSEY, JUN.**

*Clerk of the District Court, Maine.*

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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It need not be mentioned, for the information of any intelligent individuals, who were accustomed to attend at the annual commencements of BOWDOIN COLLEGE, that the general impression, produced by the ADDRESSES delivered on those occasions by President APPLETON, with regard to the importance, as well as the treatment, of their topics induced a very extensive desire for their publication; with a view to secure their preservation in a more permanent form and thereby to promote the valuable purposes contemplated in their preparation—which were by no means limited to the interest of the day.

For this purpose therefore an application was accordingly made to the President by the graduates of the institution, through the medium of a committee appointed by them at the commencement in 1818,

In the course of Providence it occurred that this was the last anniversary of the institution, at the celebration of which he officiated. Although the application for the series to that period, was not suggested by any apprehension of its immediate termination, it certainly bore an interesting and affecting relation to that impending event by which their prosecution was interrupted. Of that event it would almost appear, that a prophetic anticipation was entertained by the President himself in the emphatic expressions uttered at the close of his last ADDRESS.

At the time when this application was presented to him how-

ever, perceiving no immediate cause to doubt the continuance of his health, he concluded, from considerations not stated by him, but which may perhaps occur upon reflection to those acquainted with the nature of his official duties, to decline compliance with the request. But after the commencement in 1819, a day which will long be recollected, the prospect in that respect being, as he expressed it, "*entirely changed*," he no longer felt himself at liberty to hesitate in giving his sanction to the disposition desired to be made of the ADDRESSES. A copy of the application is inserted, as an introduction to his answer.

With a view to render the publication an useful manual for the future students of the institution, as well as an interesting memorial to those who have enjoyed its benefits, it was thought that it would increase the value of the collection, without impairing its unity, to include some other performances of Dr. Appleton upon similar occasions. As a legacy either of affection or instruction, it will probably not be rendered less acceptable, nor be deemed as requiring any apology, for being enriched with the Address delivered upon his inauguration, and what is termed the Introductory Lecture, illustrating the dangers and securities of collegial life. This lecture was originally prefixed to his regular theological course. To these is added the letter to the students written from Amherst at the commencement of his last illness, explaining his absence and enforcing upon their attention the practical observance of several important precepts. If the interest of this communication is capable of being increased by any circumstance, it would be that of its being the last ever addressed to them by him—and with particular propriety therefore closes the present volume.

A SKETCH of the President's character is prefixed. Its fidelity will be best appreciated by those most acquainted with the original and capable of estimating the elements of his character.

ADVERTISEMENT.

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The publication of these performances at this time, it is believed, will not fail to awaken the most lively sensibility among those, who are interested in the institution—who have witnessed its progressive prosperity under its late lamented President—and who anticipate its advancement from the auspicious selection of his successor.

*Brunswick, May 5, 1820.*



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TO THE REV. DR. APPLETON, PRESIDENT OF  
BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

AT a meeting of the graduates of Bowdoin College, assembled at Brunswick on the evening of the last commencement, the undersigned were appointed a committee respectfully to solicit of you for the purpose of publication, copies of the Addresses delivered by you to the successive classes of graduates during the period of your presidency.

In making this application in pursuance of their appointment, they presume not to express any other sentiment in regard to the character of those valuable and instructive performances, than is signified by the strong desire generally prevailing among the friends of the institution for such a disposition of them as may tend to place them more extensively in the possession of the public, and be best

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adapted to accomplish the interesting and important objects contemplated in them. At the same time in discharging this very grateful duty on their part, the individuals of the committee beg leave to repeat the assurance of the continued respect and affectionate regard, with which they remain,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Your most obedient servants.

CHARLES S. DAVEIS  
BENJAMIN RANDALL  
JAMES BOWDOIN  
CHARLES DUMMER  
STEPHEN EMERY  
ENOS MERRILL.

*January 5, 1819.*

MESSRS. CHARLES S. DAVEIS, ENOS MERRILL, BENJAMIN RANDALL, JAMES BOWDOIN, CHARLES DUMMER, STEPHEN EMERY.

GENTLEMEN,

WHEN I received your communication, having the usual prospect of human life, I concluded to answer in the negative.—My prospects being now entirely changed, I think it my duty to submit the Addresses to your wishes; praying God that he would make them in some measure, useful;—instrumental at least, of reminding you of those affectionate feelings, with which they were delivered,

I am, Gentlemen, most faithfully

Your friend,

J. APPLETON.

October 29, 1819.



# **A SKETCH**

**OF THE**

**CHARACTER OF PRESIDENT APPLETON.**



## SKETCH.

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**T**HAT degree of similarity, which frequently exists, even between minds of an elevated order, makes it undoubtedly less practicable to impress an obvyious stamp of individuality upon a mere abstract delineation of them. Few at least are so strikingly discriminated in their more important features, as to render it easy to produce a representation of this nature, which to those unacquainted with the original shall seem to possess internal evidence of fidelity. To this, may be added, the difficulty of expressing either mental or moral qualities by any language, however strong or specifick in itself, which has not suffered in the force and distinctness of its meaning in consequence of the misapplications, to which it has been subjected.

While to these considerations, among others, it has possibly been owing that in many memorials of intellectual excellence its history has obtained a more conspicuous place, than has been assigned to its analysis, it need not be remarked, that there is a peculiar felicity in those accounts of eminent men, in which the writers have succeeded in accomplishing the end, without observing the form of description, and exhibited the living image rather, than the mere anatomy of character.

But there are minds, perhaps, of which the least artificial exhibition can hardly be uninteresting. They affect the beholder with such an intuitive and constant sense of their superiority, that he is ready to imagine the best praise he could bestow upon them would be a simple transcript of the impressions, they habitually produce upon him. Their talents are not so much gathered from their writings, nor interwoven with incidental associations, as perceived directly in their own strong and self emitted light; not remembered, as were Goldsmith's, but like Johnson's, immediately felt and involuntarily acknowledged. Discovering an admirable tone and high determination of intellectual capacity, a concentration of faculties, unusually disciplined and prompt, they appear destined by nature not passively to reciprocate the movements of other minds, but

to communicate their own; not merely to transmit the current of passing thought, but to propel and increase the stream. Theirs seems the prerogative to re-stamp the triter coinage of human opinion and imprint upon the bullion of truth the permanent character of their own fervid and elevated genius. Operating within their sphere by an action uniformly sustained, their influence is insensibly propagated in the sentiments and sometimes reflected in the manners of an extensive portion of the community; never permitting us to forget the original vigour of their elements, nor the organic energy of their powers.

These remarks will not be deemed irrelevant to a sketch suggested by impressions analogous to those alluded to; and which, without biographical attraction, professes to present only some general lineaments of the mind of that distinguished individual, to a part of whose productions it is prefixed.

A just and affectionate tribute to his memory has already been published by one of his most intimate friends, at the request of the Trustees and Overseers of Bowdoin College; and will shortly issue from the press in connexion with his theological works. To this the publick are referred; especially for a number of interesting details respecting his life, his religious opinions, and particularly his last sick-



ness. But for the more important place reserved for the memoir just mentioned, this reference would probably have been superseded.

In the following summary notice, the writer has arranged his most discriminating recollections of President Appleton in the order, in which they happened to occur. It will have attained its object should it corroborate in any measure the evidence which has already appeared, that this eminent man was held in deep and merited veneration by those, who knew him.

The cast of Dr. Appleton's intellect was indicated by a marked predilection for analytical investigations and elementary views, a keen discernment, a grasp of truth equally cautious and energetic, combined with singular clearness and force of communication. In ethical inquiries he particularly excelled; and, theological researches excepted, they were evidently those, of which he was most fond. He was eager to possess himself of every treatise of merit, which came to his knowledge relating to subjects of this nature; and never shone to more advantage, than when discoursing upon them in such points of light, as favoured the exhibition of powers for which a Clarke and a Butler were preeminent.

For authorities, without proofs, he had little

reverence; and was as far from advancing, as he was from acceding to arbitrary and unsupported assertions. The right of private judgment he invariably recognized to its full extent; and, while he thought for himself, few perhaps have been able to conduct a discussion with others, in a manner better adapted to lead them to exercise their own understandings, to take the measure of their own positions, and behold in a clear light the proper foundations of such just opinions, as they might entertain.

Subjects, however familiar, became in some measure novel in his hands. The secret was, not the new colour he threw upon them, but the powerful light he sent through them. His was the originality, so different from that, which frequently bears the name, that was indebted, not to the efforts of an inventive imagination, but to the severity, with which it was restrained; that consisted, not in creating specious combinations, but in dissolving them. Its effect was not surprise, but conviction; not a splendid confusion of ideas, but thoughts reduced to order and cleared from obscurity.

That the peculiar character of his intellect was not unfelt in the Seminary, over which he presided, and in which he also officiated as an instructor, is evidenced in no slight degree by the comments, which gentlemen of intelligence have so often made upon the

literary performances of those, who were educated under his care. Sobriety, good sense, and manly expression have generally distinguished these exhibitions, to an extent, it may sometimes have been deemed, not only unusual, but premature; an opinion, doubtless just, had the more essential excellencies of composition, which have been mentioned, been cultivated to the neglect of imagination. For that this power is an important subject of culture, and that education should operate in a circle, expanding the whole mind, and not extending a particular faculty only, there can be no dispute.

It has been remarked of President Appleton, that "no one knew better how to propose a question;" and it may be added, that the inquiries addressed to him by those, best capable of appreciating his powers, were apt, when opportunity invited, to be indicative of the deference, they entertained for his understanding. It was delightful on such occasions to witness the interest, with which he addressed himself to his subject; and the luminous, succinct, and vigorous operations of intellect, he was accustomed to exhibit.

But the great charm of his character, that which principally contributed to secure him the affection and reverence he enjoyed, was the elevated moral and religious tone; the dignity, urbanity, and purity of

feeling; together with the nice and uniform sense of propriety, which he invariably displayed. For prudence and circumspection few have been more remarkable. But the folds of this mantle were never able to conceal the sensibility of his nature. Still more difficult would it have been to disguise the native manliness and liberality of his disposition. He might often pass for an inaccessible man; but his temper, it is believed, was not justly liable to the charge of severity. With the most uniform suavity, he was habitually serious; and his countenance was frequently marked, to no ordinary degree, with the indications of thought and care. How far it was capable, at all times, and these particularly, of exhibiting any nobleness of expression, will be long preserved in the recollection of those, who knew him. Few were more alive to the pleasures of society, that afforded any intellectual excitement. He loved discussion; and observed the laws, which should regulate its exercise and circumscribe its indulgence.

At home, he never discovered that relaxation and irritability of fibre, too often betrayed in domestick life by those, whose exertions to please in other situations are the most ambitious. But his private character for dignity, equanimity and amiableness is mentioned with marked affection and respect

by those, who were frequent visitors, and especially, inmates for considerable periods, in his family.

To the calls of his office he was unremittingly attentive. Besides the ordinary labours of the presidency, he performed the duties of one, and sometimes more of the departments of instruction in the College; together with those of a preacher and pastor, for a considerable period, to the inhabitants of the town. To these, it is unnecessary to add the frequent preparation and delivery of occasional discourses. Amid all his occupations, the interest, which he displayed in the private morals and piety of the students, is deserving of particular notice. It was an interest, that might with emphatic propriety be denominated parental. That one in his situation should have been destitute of a general concern of this description, is hardly indeed to be conceived. But it was more than general in his breast. It was deep, minute and unwearied.

He was the friend of peace and harmony in the church; and did not a little in ecclesiastical councils, and on other occasions, to promote these important objects. With respect to religious opinions, he was the advocate of candour and inquiry. His own, the publick will soon have an opportunity of ascertaining from his theological writings. His general style of

conversation and preaching has led many to conclude that caution was one of their characteristics. His religious character, as has already been intimated, was of an uniform and elevated stamp. It was marked by an unostentatious but most observable piety of spirit, and an interest in Christian truth evidently seated in the deepest convictions of his understanding and the strongest feelings of his heart. For solemnity, force, and unaffected pathos his public devotions, it is believed, have rarely been excelled. To what subject soever his conversation was directed or with whatever pleasantness relieved, it seldom approached a sacred topick, however incidentally, without discovering signs of his interior respect for every thing of a serious nature. His zealous cooperation with almost every effort, in which he could contribute to diffuse the knowledge and promote the observance of Christianity is well known. His sickness was worthy of his life; attended by an apparently premature, yet too prophetick anticipation of its result; but sustained by the humble satisfactions of a fixed and consolatory faith.

Among the many excellent qualities of President Appleton his strong attachment to the happy forms of government, with which the American republics are blessed; his high sense of the duties of a good citizen, and the solicitude he displayed to incul-

cate upon the students an enlightened and conscientious attention to them through life, must not be overlooked. Avoiding, in publick, all questions of a party nature, he aimed assiduously to cultivate in their breasts a deep respect for the fundamental principles, on which the happiness and welfare of society must stand. The following extract from one of his Addresses expresses some of his views upon this subject.

“ In no country on earth, is the action of that  
“ vast machine called civil society, maintained with-  
“ out enormous waste of moral principle. Integrity,  
“ truth, benevolence, and justice are worn away by  
“ the revolutions, which are kept up through its vari-  
“ ous parts. In what manner, do you imagine, this  
“ waste is to be repaired? Whence is that stock of  
“ virtue to be supplied, which is absolutely necessary  
“ to a prosperous state either of civil government, or  
“ social intercourse? It is from the precepts, the  
“ discoveries, and sanctions of religion. It is from  
“ christian instruction, early and incessantly applied  
“ to the public mind; by which conscience is render-  
“ ed more alive, more active, and more imperious.  
“ This, even though the statesman be ignorant of it, is  
“ the celestial dew, that nourishes the vine and  
“ fig-tree, by which he is shaded. He, who brings  
“ home, to the bosoms of those around him, a live-

“his belief in religion, a more sensible conviction of  
“the unchangeable difference between virtue and  
“vice, together with their appropriate consequences,  
“is a benefactor to the government, under which he  
“lives, to every corporation, to every profession, and  
“to every member of the state.”

The Addresses, from which the foregoing specimen is taken, were granted for publication at the request of Graduates of Bowdoin College. Under the editorial care of a committee of their appointment, they are now presented to the publick. If a number of circumstances combine to give them a peculiar interest in the view of those, to whom they were originally delivered, it is believed, they will be perused with pleasure by every discerning and judicious reader. With respect to some of them, the idea may possibly have occurred, whether they were sufficiently popular for the occasion. Upon this point it may be sufficient to suggest, that the interest, they actually excited, was apparently deep and intelligent in every portion of the audience. Something, no doubt, was owing to the fact, that the impression, they were adapted to produce, was in such accordance with the genius and reputation, not to say, the physiognomy of the eminent man, by whom they were pronounced. The publick expectation was wrought up to them; a circumstance no



less material perhaps with regard to graver exhibitions of talent, than those of a different description. The force, not of his intellect and feelings only, but of his character also, flowed naturally into them, and in some measure augmented their effect. In addition, it were difficult to conceive of a manner more earnest and rivetting, than that, in which they were delivered. It was an earnestness capable of transferring to the subject the praise due to the speaker; of leading the less prompt of apprehension to imagine they had felt the power of the sentiment, when they had rather been affected by the interest, it excited in those around them, and by the energy of interior conviction, with which it was uttered. No one perhaps was ever better acquainted with the art of enchainng an attention, he had seized, than President Appleton; and, if the allusion may be permitted, of kneading the application of his subject into a mind, he had once compressed within his grasp. In him the moral sense seemed to possess the property of genius; such a force was it able to throw into his expression of moral sentiment. It was a force, he had the secret of applying, with a pressure so steady, and an intensity so powerful, that none, whose sensibility was accessible, could be unmoved by it. Still, how far his elocution might be recommended for ease, or what many

would denominate nature, to those especially, in whom it could never be sustained by that vigour of thought, of feeling, and expression, he was accustomed to display, is open to doubt. That measured, solemn, and emphatick precision of utterance, by which it was characterized would ill accord with any intellectual or moral inferiority, with which it should be connected; or rather, it may be said, that no such inferiority could imitate this elocution in an higher degree, than would be barely sufficient to remind an audience of the original.

Each of the Addresses will be found, for the most part, to be confined to a distinct and separate train of thought; starting from some important principle of ethical or intellectual philosophy, and carried out with an invariable and manifest aim to the production of salutary and valuable impressions. The love of praise—the influence of education in determining the apparent natural capacity and taste—the connexion between piety and good morals on the one hand, and literature and science on the other—the self existent and immutable nature of virtue—the importance of acquiring a habit of insulating and fixing the attention, at pleasure—are some of the principal topics.

That they will be held in high estimation, cannot be doubted; whether the richness of their subjects

be considered ; or the sound and temperate manner, in which they are treated ; or the felicity, they display of deducing counsels, appropriate to youth, at the close of their collegial career, from themes of a more academick description, at once suited to the station of the speaker, and fitted happily to connect the instruction of the past with the practice of the future.

The style of these performances will probably be noticed for its perspicuity and strength, and the evidence it affords, how clearly the thoughts of the writer were wont to be defined to his own mind, before they were communicated to others.

Not less observable is the concern, he exhibits to fix a deep and vigorous sense of moral obligation in the breasts of those, whom he addressed. In this, an indication is afforded of the tone of sentiment, he was solicitous they should carry into life. With Cudworth, Clarke, Price, and other ethical writers of the same class, he considered the principles of rectitude, not as depending on the will of any being whatever, but as fixed and unchangeable in themselves ; recognized, not constituted by Deity ; and made the basis of the divine administration. To the elucidation and support of this system one of his Addresses is devoted, and in the others it is often introduced. That the nature of virtue is the same

in all, who possess it; that the principle, which governs the good is law not to them alone, but their Supreme Ruler; and that the greatest happiness of the universe is with him a motive to action only so far, as it can be effected with justice to each individual, are positions, therein advanced whose importance, not only in an ethical, but a theological point of view, can escape no discerning mind.

He was a close and uniform student; and the necessity of application as the first, second, and third requisite to ensure literary eminence—application, not *per saltum*, but systematick and unremitted, he appeared deeply solicitous to inculcate. He was strongly impressed with the difference he conceived to exist, in respect to habits of study, between the scholars of this country and those of Europe. He considered, that an unnecessary degree of timidity was entertained among ourselves, as to the injurious effects of laborious mental application upon the bodily health; and was persuaded, that the instances, in which they had appeared to result from this cause, had generally proceeded from inattention to exercise and regimen. “It will be pardoned, perhaps,” he remarks, “if I suggest a doubt, whether the highest degree of application, of which the mind is capable, without endangering health, has ever been ascertained, by experiment, even at our

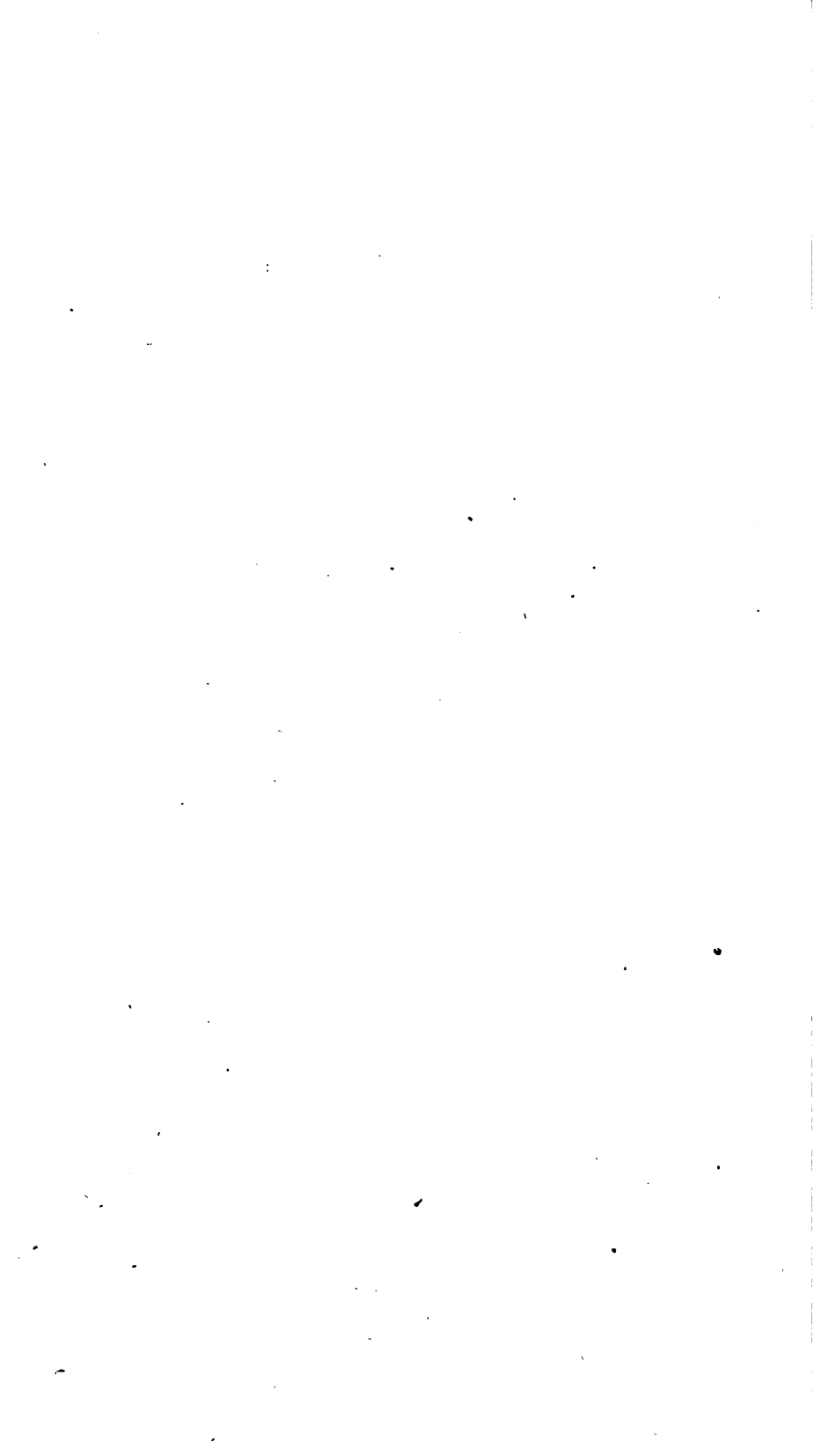
"best public seminaries." That he ascertained and even exceeded it himself, however, there is but too much reason to suppose.

The present notice was not intended to contain a regular critique upon these Addresses. That task will be better executed by others, into whose hands they may come. Several of their prominent features only have been adverted to; without estimating the comparative importance of any, which have not been mentioned.

Those, who have been educated under the presidency of Dr. Appleton will receive them, as a valuable legacy; not merely from their intrinsic worth, but the interesting associations they are adapted to excite. To these, they afford an opportunity of reviewing the counsels given them by this venerated man, at their respective commencements. The members of each class, will not have forgotten those, which were appropriated to themselves; nor the emotions produced by them, under the circumstances of their delivery. The affectionate and fervid manner of the President himself, it will cost them no effort to recal. Happy, should the desire be invigorated in their breasts to imitate him, whose motto was *exertion and duty*;—and with reference to whose character and loss, a *life not spent for itself; and a death not confined to*

*itself*, is language, to which such an emphatick signification may be deservedly attached.

Few, could have better sustained by their examples the admonitions, he was accustomed to give respecting the accountability of men for all which they possess; an accountability, commensurate with that moral existence, in which every one survives his individual dissolution, in the conduct and conditions of those, whose characters he has contributed to form; and which, notwithstanding the stroke, that mortality is capable of inflicting, may be indefinitely propagated beyond his consciousness, though not beyond his responsibility.



# **ADDRESSES**

**BY REV. JESSE APPLETON, D. D.**

**LATE PRESIDENT OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE.**





## INAUGURAL ADDRESS.



*Gentlemen, Trustees and Overseers; and Gentlemen,  
Professors and Tutors:*

SUCCEEDING, in a highly responsible office, to a man unusually qualified for it, by natural and acquired talents, and by the full possession of public confidence, it is impossible to conceal the anxiety, with which I address you: an anxiety the more oppressive, as it operates, on a system constitutionally feeble, and now scarcely recovered from wasting disease.

Speaking under these disadvantages, I solicit your favourable attention.

The interest you have taken in the establishment and superintendence of this seminary demonstrates your conviction of the utility of public literary institutions. Any observations in proof of this point would be, therefore, superfluous.

It is well known to be an infelicity attending all human establishments that they are liable to perversion. That, which is designed as a powerful instrument of good, may contribute to extensive ruin. The evil resulting from the abuse of power is generally commensurate with the good, which would be effected by a right use of it. Colleges afford no exception to these general remarks. Such has evidently been the judgment of all, by whom they have been established or cherished.

Were indolence, for example, tolerated among youth, who resort to public seminaries, the most inactive of our species would be allured thither ; and, if any of a different character should by chance or the imprudence of their guardians, mingle with them, they would soon become assimilated to the general mass. Were no care exercised by the government of colleges to preserve, or correct the morals of literary youth, there would be few conditions, perhaps, in which, the growth of moral depravity would be more rapid or more luxuriant. He, whose vices are moderate in solitude, would become intolerable, if connected with numbers, whose dispositions to offend were as great, and whose habits of offending were more inveterate than his own. Besides ; learning gives power to its possessor ; those persons, therefore, who become learned at the expense of moral

principles and moral habits, acquire at once the ability and disposition to injure society.

To secure the benefits of literary establishments to the exclusion of their disadvantages, government has been instituted. It has not been thought sufficient, that the means of knowledge should, be afforded, but that a disposition should likewise be cultivated to apply this knowledge to a right use. Without this, colleges could not exist; or if they *could*, they *ought* not, as they would only be the instruments of arming the wicked to distress the good.

In this view of the subject, we clearly perceive the high value of good government; and we see, that the object of such government always is, and always must be to promote the literary and moral character of those, who acknowledge it.

Laws, whether those of a college or of a civil community should be few in number, easily understood, reasonable in themselves, and punctually executed. Laws, which are not worth executing were never worth enacting; and when they exist, should be erased from the code, to which they belong. If it be a known case, that some are violated with impunity, it is neither difficult nor unreasonable to presume the same of others: hence the authority of the whole becomes enfeebled: and for the same reason, that laws should be repealed, rather than suf-

ferred to become obsolete, those, which are designed for execution, should be executed with uniform punctuality. On entering college, a student does, in fact, form a contract with the governours of the institution. *They* promise to instruct and guard him with parental care: *he*, on his part, stipulates obedience to the laws, docility, application, and correct habits. When *every transgression and disobedience receives a just recompense of reward*, there is no cause of complaint: nothing takes place, but what, at the time of entering into the agreement, it was understood, should take place. The offender receives the punishment specified by those regulations, to which he consented, and under which he placed himself. When determined to commit a crime, he does it, in the distinct view of its consequences. Not so, should facts render it uncertain, whether strict obedience will be uniformly required. In this case, there would be a language in the administration, indefinite, to be sure, but certainly different from that of the written code: and he, who was disposed to transgress would consider it problematical, whether, in case of detection, he should suffer, or be acquitted,—whether he should be judged by the law, or by some unknown modification of it. It appears, then, not only that the steady enforcement of established laws is necessary to preserve subordination, and se-

cure authority from contempt, but that it is likewise most fair and honourable as it respects the party stipulating obedience.

That the morals of students ought to be a matter of primary attention does not admit of a moment's debate. If we be the subjects of moral government, and responsible to that Lawgiver and Judge, *who is able to save or destroy*, literary acquirements, however splendid, but poorly compensate for increasing degeneracy of heart: and the case is still worse, if, in proportion as the life becomes profligate, there be a contemptuous neglect of literary pursuits. No one can reflect, without mortification and extreme regret, that any serious parent should ever withhold from his sons the benefits of a public education, from a well grounded fear, that their minds would be corrupted. This reflection is the more distressing, if we consider, that the churches of our land are expecting, and have a right to expect from colleges their future supply.

Figure to yourselves a youth of promising, perhaps of brilliant talents, of engaging deportment, and strict morality, leaving his father's house for a four years' residence at some seat of learning. Who can wonder at those high hopes, which are mingled with parental prayers and benedictions? Who can wonder, that a father's, or a mother's fondness some-

times anticipates the future usefulness and elevation of their son? Suppose this amiable lad unhappily becomes acquainted with individuals of dissipated life. By intimacy, and perhaps by flattery on their part, he contracts a fondness for their society and of their vices. Adopting himself what he is pleased with in them, he attends on college exercises without constancy or pleasure, and after having been the instrument of diffusing among others, the same corruption, which he has received, returns to his anxious parents, intemperate, profane, debauched, and a despiser of God !

I well know, it is not within human power to change the heart. Instructors can, by no efforts, communicate to their pupils, a conformity to the divine image. But, surely, there are restraints, which may be imposed,—there are means, which may be used, and which are, commonly in a greater or smaller degree, accompanied with success : and I tremble under the solemn conviction, of the high accountability of that office, on which I am entering ;—a conviction, that the usefulness of the students in time, and their character through eternity may be affected, greatly affected by the manner, in which the executive officers of college discharge their duty.

To remark, that there is an important connexion

between good government and good morals, would be asserting what no one disbelieves: he, therefore, who is hostile to wholesome restraint, in literary or civil communities, commences a warfare with moral obligation. Now, if such be the importance of government, surely, they, who oppose it, are worthy of dishonour. But, in order to their being distinguished with merited dishonour, they must be known; and, in order to this, they, who are acquainted with their offences, must, when called on to give testimony, come forward with honourable frankness,—with unshrinking integrity. There is nothing more inconsistent, not only with the gospel of Christ, but with a just sense of honour, with the hardihood and spirit of a man, than to interpose between the law and the culprit, a wilful violation of truth. Because my neighbour is so unhappily deserted of God, as to raise a seditious hand against the laws of the state, and would thereby bring ruin on myself, in common with every citizen, am I, so strongly bound to him, that I should sell my conscience and hazard my soul to secure him from punishment? Must I sacrifice common honesty;—must I meanly evade inquiries, because, forsooth, himself and accomplices will be offended at my plain declaration of truth?

It would be immaterial, whether no laws existed, or whether all crimes were sure to be concealed.



In either case, the transgressor would be exempted from fear, and from all restraint. Fear and restraint will, therefore, be diminished in proportion to the probability of concealment, and this probability will depend on the disposition, which generally prevails, either to take side with the law, or with those, who rise to oppose it.

It is a circumstance extremely inauspicious, when students conceive the idea, that their interest and that of their instructors can be different and hostile: or that any infraction of college government is so much clear gain acquired to themselves. The fact is, that whatever tends to the honour and advantage of the one, tends equally to the honour and advantage of the other. It is for the honour of government, that the student should acquire knowledge, and be adorned with every moral and amiable accomplishment. Can the reputation, the utility, the best interest of the latter be promoted in a different manner? Sedition is not the interest of the student, nor is oppression the interest of government.

Gentlemen, shall I take the liberty of introducing a few remarks relating to the studies pursued in this college? It is justly considered as part of liberal education to obtain some knowledge of antiquity, heathen mythology, and heathen ethics. That volume, which we denominate "Sacred Scripture" af-

fords us information, not only as to a period, concerning which, we obtain light from no other source ; but leads us back to the creation itself, showing the time, when this event took place, its progress, and the circumstances, by which it was attended. Besides the ancient mythology of heathen nations, it speaks of a different system of divinity, commencing with creation, and descending down through the space of four thousand years. It describes an extraordinary people,—an extraordinary system of polity and morals. In addition to this it gives us a very minute narration of a personage, claiming to be the Son of God ; whose life and doctrines were confessedly different from those of any other person on earth. Now, should we entirely leave out the matter of inspiration and divine authority, it would still be true, that there is not a volume on earth, whose claims on the attention of literary men are so strongly supported. But when we consider the scriptures as given by inspiration of God ; unfolding a system of grace to a world under condemnation ; presenting, to our apostate species, the only conditions of eternal safety ; a knowledge of these writings has a value, which language cannot describe.

I would respectfully suggest, whether some very general system, containing the outlines of christian theology might not, with advantage, be considered

as a necessary part of collegiate studies ; and whether *his* education should not be considered as deficient, who has no particular knowledge of the facts and doctrines described in the sacred volume.

*Young Gentlemen, Students of this college ;*

By resorting to this place, you publicly declare, that literature is your immediate object. In giving you an opportunity to be liberally educated, God has bestowed on you a privilege of high value. You are the objects of public attention, you are the objects of parental anxiety. It is in your power to do much honour to this rising institution ;—it is in your power to disgrace it. It is in your power to pierce with grief your affectionate parents, or to cause their hearts to sing for joy. Between these alternatives, you cannot hesitate.

Many students have most unhappily received the idea, that great genius and close application should never unite ; and that dissipation and indolence are strong marks of superior intellects. This opinion is the legitimate offspring of depravity and dulness. If a youth possess genius, should it be cultivated or neglected ? Should he be learned or ignorant ? If learned, in what way, is his literature to be acquired ? Will it come to him, without his seeking ? Does idleness give to the mind a certain

susceptibility of knowledge? Will an acquaintance with antiquity,—with the works of taste,—with the language and the government of former ages descend and rest upon him, while his mind is vacant of thought, or deeply engaged in profligacy and dissipation? If he acquire knowledge with ease, he is doubly criminal for neglecting the pursuit. If he do well with little study, what brilliant success would crown intense application!

It may not, indeed, be difficult for a person, whose fondness for an irregular life, is combined with vanity, to mistake his loose habits for marks of intellectual merit. But his *acquaintance* will be more incredulous:—they will deny his pretensions, till he bring forward some stronger proof: *they* will demand, that his high talents, if such he possess, be cultivated, and applied to some useful purpose.

But though many motives may with propriety be exhibited in favour of studious diligence and correct morals, nothing can *ensure* these, but the commanding voice of religion. *That* not only shows the creature's obligation to devote his talents to the Being, from whom he received them; but it awes the mind, restrains a wandering imagination, and concentrates the intellectual powers; thus preparing the soul for the most successful application to any subject.

I entreat, that you would, by no means, imbibe the opinion, that persons of different ages, and variously stationed in life are to be regulated by different systems of morality. Our obligations to the Supreme Being commence with our moral agency, and continue forever. The divine law is not repealed, nor is it suspended during the season of youth. There are no persons on earth more certainly bound to love their Creator and *to live godly in Christ Jesus*, than you, to whom I am now affectionately speaking. *To live without God* is not the privilege of youth; it is the privilege, (if such it can be termed) of those, and of those only, on whom the gifts of reason and conscience were never conferred.

Whether we shall exist accountable beings or not, is a matter, which our Creator does not submit to our option. It is not left for us to decide, whether we will receive our destiny among the rational, or irrational part of the works of God. We can not annihilate our accountability, nor get free from it, a single hour. We must exist, whether, we will or not, and take the eternal consequences of those characters, which we now form.

In your pursuit of learning, as well as in your ordinary behaviour, consider the relation, which every action has to your character and happiness in the present state, and to your honour or dishonour

in the world to come. It is undeniably the part of wisdom, not mainly to consult the present hour, but to take all consequences, all future scenes into view, and, whatever youthful ardour may dictate, the time advances, when there will be, on the subject of human conduct and human feelings, but one opinion. The high and the low, the learned and the ignorant, the illustrious and obscure, the sober and the gay will be alike convinced, that *the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding.*

I cannot persuade myself to close this address, without adverting to an idea already suggested, that the government of this college have no interest different from yours; and that you, of course, cannot possibly have an interest hostile to theirs. They will require nothing of you, which, under the like circumstances, they would not require of those, whom they love most tenderly;—even of those, towards whom they feel a parent's fondness. They would not, without necessity, give you a single mortification, nor a moment's pain. They wish to see you virtuous, happy, and honourable. If, at any time, they should be under the distressing necessity of punishing, which necessity, may divine grace prevent, they will not act from a vindictive spirit, but from a sense of *duty* to the *public*, and to that Being,

to whom they, as well as you, must give an account.

Finally ; may the government and the students of this seminary alike feel their dependance on the Almighty.

“ Thou art the source and center of all minds,  
 Their only point of rest, *eternal Word* ;  
 From thee departing, they are lost, and rove  
 At random, without honour, hope, or peace ;  
 From thee is all, that soothes the life of man :  
 His high endeavour, and his glad success ;  
 His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.  
 But O ! thou bounteous giver of all good !  
 Thou art, of all thy gifts, thyself the crown ;  
 Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor,  
 And with thee, rich, take what thou wilt away.”

## ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1808.

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*Young Gentlemen,*

**O**N such an occasion as this, I do not ask your attention; for I know you will grant it. Permit me to hope, that your remembrance of what is said, and your practical regard to it, will be equal to the readiness, with which it is now heard.

If your object in resorting to this place were not merely to obtain academical honours, but to acquire that which merits them, it can scarcely be necessary to set before you the importance of continued application. Your short excursion into the fields of science, has not brought you within the sight of boundaries; but only, as I would hope, to a humble



conviction, that the space already passed over, is extremely small, compared with that, which remains to be traversed. That branch of a learned education, which I would particularly advise you to review and cultivate, is the Latin and Greek languages. Against the study of these, there was some years since, a very preposterous but powerful opposition. Impatient of application, and every species of restraint, many flattered themselves, that their superior intellects had suggested to them the possibility of being learned without study. Ancient languages, as well as habits, and modes of thinking, were viewed with a kind of barbarian contempt.

An auspicious change has been produced on this subject. A knowledge of the dead languages is now cultivated with increasing assiduity. There is scarcely a college in New England, where terms of admission have not been raised, and where greater progress than formerly, is not considered an essential part of a public education. The great regard, which is paid to the dead languages in general at the Universities in Europe, is evinced by the effects which it has produced in recovering and collecting ancient copies and manuscripts.

It is a most obvious inconsistency, to be indifferent to the retaining of that, which could be acquir-

ed only by the labour of several years. Whatever knowledge you possess on this subject, or any other, will, without constant attention, gradually decay. Be persuaded to continue and augment your acquaintance with the languages of Greece and Rome, by devoting a reasonable portion of your time to their poets, orators, and historians.

Coming forward as you do, at a crisis, the most eventful, you cannot be indifferent to the destinies of your country. It is not my business to excite your passions and prejudices, nor to enlist you into either of those political parties, which have so unhappily divided our country. But there is a party, with which I would, by all means, desire to have you connected. I mean the party of those, under whatever political denomination they are ranked, who sincerely and ardently love their country; the genuine descendants of the first settlers of New England; of men, who had an invincible courage, founded on religious principles; a determined spirit, which nothing could break or subdue; men, of whom it may be said, without figure, that "they loved liberty more than they feared death."

While you boast of being the offspring of those noble spirits, distinguished alike for their love of good order, of religion, and freedom, regard those with peculiar respect and affection, who display the same character.

Whatever object you have in view, whether of a public or private nature, be sure that your measures be fair and honourable. Noble ends are to be pursued by noble means. Among the evils attendant on political divisions, it is not the least, that by inflaming the passions, they diminish a regard to truth and moral obligation.

Perhaps there has never been a day, when you were in greater danger than at present, of forming too flattering expectations of future life. New objects now present themselves; new prospects open upon you. Be not deceived. You belong to a species of beings, *whose foundation is in the dust, and who are crushed before the moth.*

From the most perishable objects on earth, the divine oracles borrow their figures to delineate human frailty. What is man? A tale that is told; a shadow that flies; grass that withers; a flower that falls; vapour that vanishes. This very occasion brings to your remembrance an illustration of these remarks. In the removal of him,\* under whose successful tuition you first became members of this seminary, you perceive that neither suavity of temper, solid and well cultivated talents, nor humble, unaffected piety, can secure life to its possessor.

\* The Rev. Dr. Mc KEEN, late president of this college.

The evidences of christianity have constituted part of your classical study. You know the ground, which supports that noble edifice. Winds may rush against it; storms may beat upon it; surges may dash around it; 'tis all in vain. *The foundation of God standeth sure.*

Permit me to use this last opportunity of urging your attention to the discoveries, precepts, and doctrines of the gospel, the internal frame and texture of that faith, which was once delivered to the saints. It is not easy to conceive a greater absurdity, than to bestow much labour and learned investigation on the evidence of christianity, while there is a perfect indifference to the doctrines, precepts, and discoveries, of which this religion consists. If the gospel be not worth studying, loving, and practising, it is not worth defending.

I entreat you to study christianity, as that, by which God will regulate the retributions of eternity. It is not a religion, which flatters human nature in the least; nor can any, which has God for its author, or truth for its foundation. But, while it represents the species, to which you belong, as in a state of moral ruin, it not only shows the possibility of recovery through a Redeemer; but presents to your view many instances of its own efficacy to change the heart and the life. Let it

be your first and grand object to possess the christian temper, to feel the power of evangelical principles. Let the lives, which you live in the flesh, be influenced and cultivated by your faith in the Son of God. If you embrace genuine christianity, whatever profession you pursue, it will make you more happy, more useful, more consistent, and uniform. It places before you the noblest objects, it requires you to act from the most elevated motives; it promises to the obedient, thrones and kingdoms, which can never be removed.

Next to the great concern of securing peace with God, I would recommend it to you, to have some profession, at least, some object, some pursuit distinctly in view. This will give stability, and tend to concentrate your intellectual efforts. While you pursue, with unremitting resolution, some important object, and rigidly adhere to whatever you believe to be the will of your Maker, cultivate suavity of temper, urbanity of manners, and, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. There is not an individual, belonging to our species, whose convenience and feelings are to be wholly disregarded.

Finally, let me remind you of the great number of those, who will, with lively interest, witness your deportment. The patrons of this institution deplore

the irregularity, and rejoice in the virtues, of all, who pertain to it. The immediate Government unite with yours, their own happiness and honour. Your parents feel an anxiety, which can neither be expressed by them, nor repaid by you. Individual benefactors, and a generous legislature, will examine the fruit of a tree, planted by their care, nourished and refreshed by their repeated acts of liberality.

But there is a witness, whose attention you cannot for a moment avoid. His approbation or censure will be expressed to you, not only before the individuals, who compose this assembly, but, before an assembled universe. For "I saw," said the exile of Patmos, "I "saw the dead, both small and great, stand before "God; and the books were opened, and the dead "judged out of the things written in the books."



# ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1809.

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*Young Gentlemen,*

**I**N your character of members of this seminary, I now address you for the last time: nor, considering the frailty and casualties of human life, is it unreasonable to reflect, that even your small number may never return to this place. If it should, I am not unmindful of another event, which may render communications from me equally impossible.

To possess intellectual natures is your privilege, and perhaps your pride. But, there is no privilege, which does not imply corresponding obligation. Your rational powers have already been a source both of pleasure and of pain. You have had enjoyments and sufferings, the very existence of which



implied intelligence. This rational nature, whether it continue ten years, or ten thousand, will be uniform in rendering its possessor susceptible of happiness or misery.

Man sees a difference in moral actions. He sees, that a certain course ought to be pursued, and that deviations from such a course ought to be condemned. It is impossible that perception of right should not produce uneasiness in him, who is conscious of being wrong. Nor is it less impossible, that self approbation and joy should not arise in the heart, when duty and moral character are perceived to be coincident.

If the difference between right and wrong be clearly discerned by intelligent creatures; much more is it discerned by Him, who is the source of intelligence. Nor can it be conceived, that while this difference is clearly in the view of our Creator, there should not be a corresponding difference in the treatment, received from him by his rational offspring. Nothing, but the want of power, can prevent a being of moral rectitude from manifesting his affection for virtue, and his opposition to vice. A man of real virtue has assurance, therefore, that his Maker views him with complacency: the transgressor, must on the same ground, adopt, in regard to himself, a contrary conclusion. Nor

can either rationally doubt, that the divine estimation of both, will, in some part of their existence be made public ; it being absurd to suppose, that He, who is independent, and of power unlimited, should suffer himself to be considered neuter in the grand controversy between virtue and vice. You perceive then, not only that the doctrine of a retribution is consonant with reason, but that reason is irreconcilably hostile to the opposite belief.

We are not more concerned to know, that there will be a retribution, than to ascertain *what* in human actions will be the subject of commendation or censure. Rational doubt on this subject cannot long be entertained. Besides the intentions, or, what christianity denominates the heart, there can be nothing in human actions, but either modulations of voice, or bodily motions. Is it, in any measure, questionable, whether virtue can be predicated of the two last? Can virtue be directly concerned whether your limbs move in a straight, or a curve line? Or whether your lungs and organs of speech, be adapted to the producing of one sound, rather than another? If not, morality must consist, agreeably to the christian doctrine, in purity of heart. Our obligations to the maintenance of this, are neither occasional nor intermitting. They are constant, and eternal. Whatever appear-

ance of rigour there may be in the doctrine, that moral obligation extends to every moment of rational life, it is impossible that any consistent scheme of ethics should be formed, in which this doctrine is not either asserted or implied. If intelligent creatures be obligated to obey the rule of moral rectitude at one moment, they cannot be at liberty to deviate from it at any other.

These fundamental principles of natural religion, are, by christianity, confirmed, and placed in a light, the most clear and impressive. You are therein taught, not only, that the divine estimation of moral actions will hereafter be known; but that a day for *revealing the righteous judgments of God* is now fixed in the eternal counsels of heaven, when the Most High shall associate with him, all, who are upright in heart, and declare his immutable hatred to the cause and the patrons of vice. Interested, as you will be in the decisions of the final judgment, suffer not yourselves to be deceived as to the terms on which your Maker's approbation is to be obtained. Be not content with those ill defined, those shapeless images of virtue, presented to your view, in the language of an immoral, unthinking age. That virtue, which unites her votaries to the divine nature, must imply a resemblance to the divine moral character. You are going forth into the world, at

an age, in which vice is treated with indulgence and courtesy ; and of course, a very moderate portion of regularity in deportment, will pass for superior virtue. It would, therefore, you perceive, be extremely dangerous to reckon yourselves among the friends of real virtue, because you may not fall short of the common standard, or even should you far exceed it. He, whose object on earth was to *bear witness to the truth* ; He, by whom the eternal destinies of mankind will be decided, has taught us, that the world in general is unfriendly to that moral purity, which he will recognise and reward. Nor can I permit the present opportunity to pass, without reiterating what you have frequently heard, that no dispositions nor actions will appear with honour, in the final result, but those, which proceed from inward affection to the Supreme Being. *No plants, but those, which our heavenly Father has planted, will be transferred to the Paradise of God.*

Should you be disgusted with the doctrines of christianity, or terrified at the strictness of its moral requirements ; be assured, that nothing can be gained by an attempt to disbelieve it. If you cultivate habits of thinking, evidences of religion, both natural and revealed, will thicken around you. Should you reject the latter no advantage would be acquired, even on the score of present comfort. Natural re-

ligion has all the severity of revealed, with none of its mercy. Even atheism itself, were it true, would give no security against future sufferings; since the cause, whatever it be, by which we now exist, may continue our existence without limits.

Deliberate discussions of moral subjects, and enquiries concerning them, are much to be encouraged. Truth has nothing to fear from intense scrutiny. But I would advise you never to raise trifling objections, however plausible, against what you believe to be true, lest they should eventually appear to have weight from the circumstance of their being your own. If deceived by others, your loss may be great: but if deceived by yourselves, the loss will be equal, and the guilt greater.

Having made these remarks on the great subject of religion, I would subjoin others, relating to the external course of your future lives.

Our Creator has been pleased to ordain, that nothing valuable should be acquired without effort. Though exhortations to industry are perpetually reiterated, and its importance displayed, it is by no means easy to be convinced of the real extent of its power. Those philosophers, civilians, or professional men, whose fame or writings have long survived them, have not been indebted for their elevation, exclusively to the bounties of nature. Their

ardour, industry, and invincible resolution, had no inconsiderable effect in forming their characters. Though the observations of Sir Isaac Newton, and Sir William Jones, as to the mediocrity of their own original abilities, are to be considered rather the result of their modesty, than as conveying literal truth; it cannot be doubted that *their surprising industry* would have procured very honourable distinction, even to persons of common intellects. By application an incredible difference may be produced between persons, whose natural endowments are not dissimilar. But habits of industry, if they ever exist, must be formed at an early age. Let me entreat you to get and preserve a command over your own minds; the power of directing them to whatever object requires your attention.

I take it for granted, that you are not indifferent to human estimation; and I hope, that you will never affect such indifference. But whose approbation do you covet?

“—Nam satis est equitem mihi plaudere.: ut audax,  
Contemptis aliis, explosa Arbuscula dixit.”

You would not be anxious for praise from the stupid and undiscerning: and pray, would their approbation be an object, more to be regarded, whose intellects are so biassed by moral depravity, *as to put evil for good and good for evil?* But if you

value the esteem of wise and good men, you will desire, still more eagerly, the approbation of upright beings, superior to man; and most of all must you covet the approbation of Him, whose judgment will eternally accord with the truth.

Never suffer a desire of praise to engage you in that, which will end in *shame and everlasting contempt*.

Though the opinion of others is entitled to attention, you cannot be justified in adopting it merely on their authority. As intelligent agents, you are accountable for the use, which you make of your intellectual powers. But a person of an independent mind is not under the necessity of being supercilious and dogmatical. Young men, on their leaving college, have frequently been charged, (perhaps not always unjustly) with giving their opinions with too much confidence, and impatiently bearing contradiction. May it be *your* care never to deserve this reproach. A modest deportment is not more becoming, than it is advantageous. He, who makes a humble estimate of his own talents or virtues, usually finds others ready to do ample justice to both. As their own sensibility and pride, are not wounded by his high pretensions, they will have no pleasure in his mortification.

As the habit of expressing opinions dogmatically

is disgusting; that of doing it frequently is imprudent. Opinions, formed hastily, will often by consequence be incorrect : and, in proportion to the frequency of a man's judging incorrectly, will his opinion be disregarded, when a decision is required.

Be conscientiously upright in your statement of facts ; especially when character is concerned. Do not *scatter firebrands, arrows, and death, and say, that you are only in sport.* Human depravity is scarcely in any thing more clearly shown, than in the pleasure, which, in spite of all efforts to conceal it, is often manifested in reporting the vices or indiscretions of others. An impression, made by a single sentence, may be communicated to many, producing permanent injury to individual characters; an injury, which, perhaps the author of the expression did not contemplate, and may be wholly unable to remedy. It was the resolution of a man, as eminent for talents, as for piety, never to disclose the vices of men, unless some object of real importance required it. On such occasions, it becomes a duty : and to withhold a plain, upright statement of facts, when order, virtue, or the public good requires, argues a disposition criminally servile and timid.

Though it is as well your interest, as your duty, to treat all persons with civility and decorum, I would by no means advise you to be intimate with



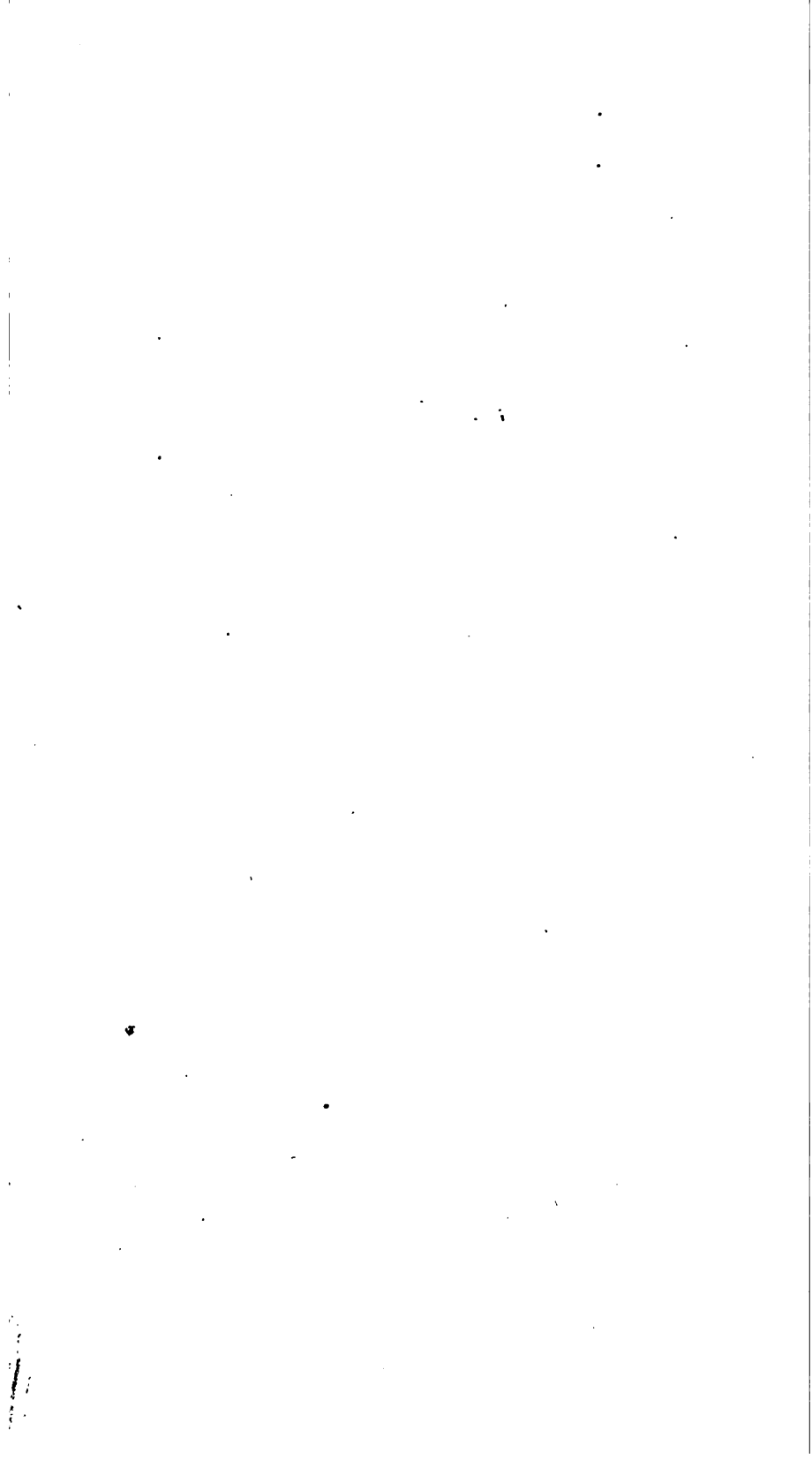
a great number of persons; nor with any on slight acquaintance. If any should offer you their confidence on easy terms, be assured, it is not worth having. You cannot think highly of *his* discretion, who is willing to put himself in your power when but superficially known to him.

That your reputation and safety depend much on the associations, which you form, cannot be doubted. Open profligates are not the only persons, whose intimacy may be injurious. There are thousands, not belonging to this description, whose system of morals, if they may be said to have any, less resembles christian morality, than the practical standard of pagan ethics. Unite yourselves to those at present, whose future destiny you would choose to participate. *He, that walketh with wise men, shall be wise.*

Young Gentlemen,—To a deportment, fair and honourable, and to a life of christian piety, I exhort you by your love of good reputation and hatred of shame; by your affection and gratitude to those, who gave you birth; by your sense of the public generosity, and your regard to the approbation of those illustrious characters,\* whose attendance evin-

\* On this occasion, his Excellency Governour Gore, his Honour Lieut. Governour Cobb, and other gentlemen of distinction were present.

ces, the interest, which they take in this literary establishment, and by whom is not forgotten, either the prosperity of the commonwealth, of science or christianity :—Finally, I exhort you by the solemnity of that hour, when as little of mortal existence shall remain, as now remains of your academical life ; and by the still greater solemnity of the day, when *the Son of God shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired of all them that believe.*



## ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1810:

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*Young Gentlemen,*

THE very few moments of your college life, which now remain, and which will soon be as irrecoverable, as "the years beyond the flood," I would eagerly seize with design to produce or perpetuate moral impressions.

I do most sincerely felicitate you on the arrival of this day. I partake largely in those sensations of tenderness and joy unutterable, which are, at this moment, experienced by your parents and connexions. They now obtain a joyful release from the anxiety, which, since your removal from them, has been almost their daily companion. They have witnessed the first fruits of your intellectual efforts, and

now look forward to the time, when you may appear on a more public stage, perform duties of more interest to society, and exhibit characters of more firm and deep wrought texture.

At all periods of life, we are liable to be deceived by the sound of words. There are circumstances and seasons, however, when this deception may be practised upon us with peculiar facility. To young gentlemen of ingenuous feelings, nothing is recommended perhaps, which they hear with more pleasure, *than independence of character.*

Though this term, in its legitimate use, comprehends qualities of high value, it is not unfrequently made to designate those, by which reason and morality are set equally at defiance.

Beyond all question, no person is independent of the Divine Being. If any think otherwise, why do they not give some proof of that power and elevation, of which they are so ready to boast? Why do they not secure to themselves perpetual life, and youth, and vigour? Why do they tolerate a lowering atmosphere, when their convenience requires serene weather? Why is the sun permitted to delay its rising, when its light is necessary to their business or pleasures? Why, indeed, should independent beings ever be disappointed? If they control events, why do the latter counteract their desires?

Among all the absurdities of heathen mythology, a constant sense of dependance on divine agency is remarkable. If a child was born, the gods marked his destiny. If battles were fought, the gods held the balance, and gave preponderancy to which scale, they pleased. If a dart was thrown, it fell harmless unless divinely directed. Among the leaders of a numerous, combined army, it was noticed, if there was one, who acknowledged no dependance on celestial powers; or boasted, *Dextra mihi Deus, et telum, quod missile libro*. The best of the spoils, taken in war, were devoted by the Greeks in sacrifice to the gods. Their augury, oracles, supplications, and religious processions, unite to prove, that the sentiment expressed by Pliny in his panegyric on Trajan, was common among the Greeks and Romans, *Nihil rite, nihilque providenter homines, sine Deorum immortalium ope, consilio, honore, auspicarentur*.

If you are not now, it is certain, that you never can be independent of your Creator. Objects, events, and the universe itself, will never be less under the divine direction, than they are at present. Whether you shall advance in your studies, acquire fair reputations, or extensive influence; whether you shall enjoy a high state of health or long life, will depend subordinately on your activity and prudence; but ultimately on the same power, which gave you being.

Nor is this remark to be applied exclusively to the present life. A hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand years hence, you will be equally dependent, as at the present moment ; and perhaps much more obviously so. Nay further ; to whatever part of the empire of God you may be urged, your dependence will never diminish. The treatment, which you shall receive from your Creator will depend on the agreement or disagreement, which there is between your character and his commands. Whenever persons pretend to independence as it relates to Deity, they deceive no one. It is always taken for what it really is, a most nauseous compound of impiety and affectation. The independence of him, who sets the divine law at defiance, is that of a man, who, to show his spirit, should fire his own house, leap from a precipice, or swallow a deadly potion. By any of these outrages, the power of Deity would not be diminished ; and surely his own would not be enlarged. He still exists ; and precisely in that place, and under those circumstances, which an offended Deity sees fit to assign.

Acquainted, as you are, with the general evidence of natural and revealed religion, you can hardly be thought in danger of openly disavowing your obligations to the Most High. But even in relation to your fellow creatures, you will permit

me to observe, dépendance is probably much greater, than you imagine. The change, which is now to take place in your mode of life, is doubtless very considerable ; but does by no means imply a transition from dépendance to independence. Your relations in a variety of respects will, henceforward, be different. They will be so in regard to your instructors : perhaps too your dépendance on parental support will be less absolute, than heretofore. But duties and restraints, though varied, will be neither less numerous, nor less important. A state of society is necessarily a state of dépendance : and if the obligations, hence resulting, are contemned, society understands perfectly well, how to bring delinquents to a better mind. I am not speaking exclusively of those restraints, which are imposed by deliberative assemblies, or which ever assume the formality of laws ; but of the numerous regulations, more easily understood, than defined, which are known to be of real consequence in the intercourse of social life. As the common interest and feeling require, that these be observed, habitual inattention to them never passes with impunity. Should the interest of others be to you a matter of indifference, it will soon be rendered evident, that yours is so to them. Should you by a supercilious deportment show contempt for their esteem, they will not long want op-



portunities of convincing you of the evils, resulting from the want of it.

Society has agreed upon certain modes of civility, agreeably to which social intercourse shall be maintained. Even these, so far as they comport with strict morality, are not to be violated. Nothing is more deservedly an object of ridicule, than the affectation of him, who would, on the neglect of these, establish a claim to superior intellects.

The many restrictions, of which I am speaking, whether they relate to moral behaviour or not, have, to all intents and purposes, the nature of laws: penalties are affixed to their violation, and are usually exacted with rigorous punctuality.

If a young man be inattentive to study, or business, lives without method and without an object, the penalty, which he incurs, consists in not making acquisitions, valuable to himself, and in not obtaining the confidence of others. If he be dissipated, he will suffer punishment, in the loss, not only of property and health; but of the estimation of those, whose patronage is necessary to his elevation in life. If he be thoughtless, or given to exaggerations in speech; or if he exhibit temerity in judgment or action, he will experience punishment in the superior credit, which is allowed to the opinions and representations of those, who speak and act with

greater caution. It is vain to set at defiance those with whom you are, every day, conversant ; and whose opinion or feelings will be the ground of that treatment, which you receive from them. Nor do these remarks apply exclusively to the early part of life. Even if your future success correspond with our highest wishes, you will still find, that though many are dependant on you, you are likewise dependant on many. This would be true under any form of government on earth : under that popular establishment, which we enjoy, it is emphatically so.

What then, you may ask, is really independence of character ? I answer, It consists in an habitual determination of the mind to regard objects according to their value : in making the best use of our own intellects for the discovery of truth and duty, and in a resolute conformity to these, when made known. While it rejects a servile imitation of others ; it does by no means require a contempt for their sentiments or example. Nothing can be more inconsistent with an independent spirit, than to profess conviction, where you do not feel it : or to say, that you now perceive the falseness of former opinions, when you are only convinced, that present interest requires you to renounce them. To act agreeably to the dictates of reason and conscience, though present

advantage or the popular sentiment be on the other side, is to maintain the high character of a rational being : to act under the impulse of appetite, in contempt of reason and future interest, undeniably implies the most degrading servitude.

In connexion with these remarks, I cannot forbear to suggest, that the term *independent* is never more abused, than when applied to the duellist. To defend this practice on the ground of moral fitness will hardly be attempted. There is a glaring disproportion between the punishment *intended*, and the crime *alleged*. But under certain circumstances it is said, if a man do not either give or accept a challenge, he loses his honour, that is, his popularity. Now, suppose this person were a little more unfortunate than he is ; and lived among those, with whom it was unpopular to pay one's debts, or to fulfil a promise, how can he be assured, that he would not neglect both on the same principle, on which he justifies an action, far more criminal than such neglect.

But if you require *examples* of true magnanimity, —conduct, which covers its authors with real, unfading glory, they may be obtained in large number from the sacred volume ; such was the conduct of him, whose mental and personal accomplishments had, in spite of every impediment, placed him in the high confidence of Pharaoh's chief captain ; and

who, while alluring blandishments and bright prospects were on one side,—integrity, disgrace, and danger, on the other; nobly exclaimed, *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Such was the conduct of the first advocates of christianity, who, when forbidden by the rulers of the Jewish church to preach in the name of Jesus, answered, *Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye.* Such was the conduct of those noble Jews, who were raised from the condition of captives to preside over the affairs of the province of Babylon. When called to make their election between a public act of idolatry, in which thousands were engaged, and immediate death in its most terrifying form, they answered without even requiring time to deliberate, *If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image, which thou hast set up.* Proofs of an independent spirit, more noble than these, can neither be found in the history of the world, nor even painted to the imagination. With such characters, would you compare the spirit of a duellist, the spirit of a self-murderer, or the spirit of him, who sets at defiance wholesome laws and moral restraints? Can

you see the least resemblance between him, who sacrifices reputation and life to moral fitness and the will of God, and him, who in contempt of both, makes similar sacrifices either to his own passions, or to the applause of those, who think as little, and act as rashly, as himself? If there be true dignity on earth, it is found in the character of him, whose heart is the seat of true piety. He is engaged on the same side with his Maker, and receives his best enjoyments from the same sources. Nor is it possible, that these should fail, while the immutability of God remains. The security and independence of no creature is equal to theirs, to whom the Almighty has said, *Because I live, ye shall live also.*

There is no occasion, on which independence of mind is more indispensable, than in the forming of religious opinions. As neither the greatest antiquity, nor the highest human authority, can make that a scripture doctrine, which the scriptures disown; so, if a proposition be sanctioned by these writings, the greatest ingenuity, the broadest mirth, or the most poignant wit, will neither annihilate its truth, nor diminish its value. If christianity be a revelation, it is a revelation of something. Had not that which it reveals, been of high import, divine wisdom would not have resorted to such extraordinary expedients to make it known. As Jesus Christ came

to *bear witness to the truth*, it cannot be a matter of indifference, either that you deny what he taught, or believe, as under the sanction of his authority, that to which he gave no countenance. You are bound, by a diligent, impartial, and devout investigation of scripture, to ascertain its leading sentiments, and the terms, on which human offenders may obtain absolution and eternal life. You are bound to this, because you are intelligent beings, and belong to that species, for whom the instructions and blessings of christianity were intended, and will soon partake in that eternal retribution, which it reveals. You are bound to this because correct views of inspired truth have the happiest tendency to preserve you amidst allurements, to secure present usefulness and permanent reputation. In regard to them, we may use the language of the king of Israel; *Bind them continually about thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, they shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, they shall keep thee; when thou wakest, they shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.*

And now, may God Almighty, whose munificence has enabled your parents to give you, at this early age, the means of instruction, and by whose good providence, you have been preserved to rejoice with

them in the scenes and exercises of this day,—give direction to your future life, grant a prosperous issue to every just undertaking, purify your hearts by his word and spirit,—place underneath you, in the hour of death, the arms of his mercy,—and grant you a place among those, *who love the appearing and kingdom of Jesus Christ.*

## ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1811.

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*Young Gentlemen,*

WE now experience emotions, not dissimilar to those, which were felt by your parents, when, to form a connexion with this seminary, you retired from their presence and tuition. They could not contemplate, without anxiety, your removal from them at a season, when youth rendered you peculiarly sensible to temptation, and your powers of resistance had not been sufficiently tried. At present, though your ability to maintain a correct, moral deportment is increased by acquired knowledge, and additional years; the extent of your responsibility is, by these very advantages, enlarged. Having more



information, you have, by consequence, more power and influence, either to improve or abuse.

Instead of a general repetition of those cautions and moral precepts, which have so frequently been given, I would direct your attention to a single principle, the influence of which is universal; but peculiarly strong on persons in early life; *I mean the love of praise.*

To know, in what manner, this principle is to be treated, it is necessary to ascertain its nature. If it is morally good, it is by all means to be cherished; if morally bad, it must be exterminated. But if it is neither the one, nor the other, it may be regulated according to its utility.

I remark in the first place, that the love of praise is not morally good. It is common, in some degree, to men of all characters, and by no means proportionate to the state of moral feelings. The man, most habituated to deep practical views of christian morality, has a breast, far less agitated by the desire of human applause, than the youthful, adventurous warrior, of whose calculation the matter of duty and virtue makes no part. Now, if the love of praise is, in itself, morally good, the stronger it is, the more, other things being equal, will there be of moral goodness: or, if it is the result of moral goodness, when it is strongest, the heart must of necessity be most virtuous.

Besides, if this principle were, in strictness of speech, virtuous, there could be no danger in resigning ourselves to its influence. But, that there would, in doing this, be the highest degree of danger, can be doubted by no one, who reflects on those splendid characters, whether in ancient or modern times, "whose ruling passion was the lust of praise." To persons, thus impelled by ambition, the Roman Satirist attributes the fall of his country ;

"—Patriam tamen obruit olim

Gloria paucorum, et laudis titulique cupido."

But you will probably be told, that these exorbitancies proceed from the excess of a virtuous principle.

By *virtuous principle* must be meant, either virtue itself, or something, distinct from it. If the latter, that is, if the love of praise be something distinct from virtue, it is precisely what I am endeavouring to inculcate. But if by *virtuous principle* be meant virtue itself, the assertion is, that moral evil proceeds from an excess of moral goodness. Now, moral goodness consists in conformity to the requirements of our Creator. It is, therefore, just as absurd to tell of excess in virtue, as to speak of excess in the straightness of a line. It is just as absurd, to say, that exorbitancies can arise from the excess of virtue, as to say, that two lines may coincide so precisely, as not to coincide at all.

But, if the love of praise be not virtuous, you are ready to ask me, with some ardour, whether it be vicious? I answer, it is neither the one nor the other; but is to be ranked among those native propensities of the human mind, which have in themselves no moral character, such as the social, parental, and filial affections, and the love of happiness. Were the principle, of which I am speaking, criminal in itself, appeals would not have been so frequently made to it, in the sacred scriptures. *A good name is rather to be chosen, than great riches; and loving favour, rather than silver and gold. Them, that honour me, I will honour: but they, who despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.*

If the love of praise be not a moral quality, it is to be cherished, governed, or exterminated, as the effects, resulting from it, are favourable or injurious to the virtue and peace of society. That much use is made of the principle, in all governments, from that of a private family to that of an empire, cannot be questioned. The first law, made known to a child, is the will of his parents; and the sanction of this law is their approbation or displeasure. If this approbation were never expressed; or, what is, in effect, the same thing, if the child had no regard to their opinion, it requires not a moment's reflection, to be convinced, that the habits of childhood would be

far less correct, than they are at present; and that the relation between parents and children would be far less interesting and delightful.

In civil governments the love of praise is distinctly recognised; and dishonour is considered a punishment, no less than amercement, or bodily mutilation. Regard to character supersedes the necessity of an indefinite multiplication of statutes and punishments. And, in respect to *external* decency and correctness, it is a substitute for moral principle, poor indeed, but decidedly more effectual, than any other.

The influence, which it has on youth, who associate for literary or scientific purposes, is clearly perceived, and is felt, perhaps, in a greater or less degree, in every exercise.

By those, who condemn all appeals to the principle, of which we are speaking, it will be said by way of objection, that a sense of duty ought to supersede the necessity of all other motives; and, that when we appeal to the love of praise, we do but strengthen and inflame a principle, which is acknowledged to produce, on many occasions, the most dangerous effects.—It is readily conceded, that a sense of duty,—a regard to the divine law, ought to be the predominating motive of every action; and that no actions, originating from other motives, will,

at the final decision, receive either reward or approbation. If all men were what they ought to be, and were not, as they doubtless are, in a state of moral degradation, other motives, perhaps, than a sense of duty, would not be necessary, either to stimulate or restrain. But if a great proportion of mankind are destitute of this inward affection for virtue, this love of duty for its own sake, and yet there are no other propensities, which may lawfully be resorted to, all government, all restraints, and successful persuasion, are clearly at an end. Indeed, human laws, sanctioned, as they are by temporal penalties, which bring into action either self love, or the love of character, must, on this supposition, be abrogated, as having an immoral tendency. But what would the objector say to *divine* laws, the most of which are sanctioned by the rewards and punishments of a future life, and some of them by advantages or evils, to be enjoyed or suffered in the present? But especially, what would he say to those many addresses in scripture, which are expressly directed to the love of reputation and the fear of shame? Two of these passages have been already mentioned; in addition to which, we might notice our Saviour's caution to his disciples, not to obtrude themselves into elevated places, lest they should receive public dishonour; but to choose

rather the lowest seat ; in which case, any alteration, that might be proposed, would be noticed to their advantage.

But though the authority, now adduced, is paramount to all others, and perfectly decisive, it may not be amiss to observe, in answer to those, who would extirpate the love of praise, because it sometimes grows into a criminal and desolating ambition, that, on the same principle, the social and parental affections must be eradicated ; for *they* too may be so far indulged, as to countervail the most imperious dictates of morality.

We come to this conclusion, that the love of praise is not to be extirpated ; but forever to be kept subordinate to the glory of God, and the interests of his empire.

When, therefore, we hear Cicero professing a regard for “ the consenting praise of all honest men, “ and the incorrupt testimony of those, who can judge “ of excellent merit,” we find nothing to condemn. “ It is not beneath a man of the greatest dignity and “ wisdom,” says the profound Edwards, “ to value the “ wise and just esteem of others, however inferior “ to him. The contrary, instead of being an expression of greatness of mind, would show a haughty “ and mean spirit.”

But when we hear this same Roman Orator

declaring, that "there is not an instance of a man's exerting himself ever with praise and virtue in the dangers of his country, who was not drawn to it by the hopes of glory, and posterity," meaning hereby the *approbation* of posterity, we cannot fail to perceive, that talents, the most surprising and various, and under the highest possible cultivation, are inadequate to discover, without celestial light, the only true and solid ground of moral duty : and to apply to the most enlightened among the heathen moralists, the words of the poet,

"—Tanto major famæ sitis, est quam  
Virtutis ; quis enim virtutem amplectitur ipsam,  
Præmia si tollas."

The love of reputation will contribute to correctness of morals, so long as the latter is in good repute. And, considering how much the understandings of all men approve what is right, and how much it is for the interest even of the vicious, that others should act with integrity and good faith, it is hardly to be presumed, that virtuous deportment will ever be *generally*, or *extensively* disreputable. A comprehensive regard to the opinions of men, especially in countries, where christianity is taught with tolerable clearness, will always, therefore, it may be presumed, tend in a greater or less degree, to promote regularity of life.

I am speaking, you will observe, of conduct *externally* correct and virtuous. But even in regard to this, the unrestrained love of popularity may lead to consequences, most to be deprecated. For, though it is true, that mankind in *general*, however vicious, do not approve vice in others, it may be your misfortune to associate with many *individuals*, whose passions, prejudices, or interest will lead them to praise what is wrong, and condemn what is right. You may reside in places, where, not indeed the great principles of morality are denied, and their opposites applauded; but where many customs, inconsistent with christian morals are supported by universal suffrage. And, though the consenting opinion of enlightened and good men of various ages and countries can hardly be supposed erroneous, on practical subjects; the opinions of *individual* good men are by no means an infallible guide. They may so connect their own interest and that of their party, with the great interests of probity and truth, as to suppose whatever is favourable to the one, cannot fail, eventually, of advancing the other.

It is evident, therefore, that were you allowed to make *external* correctness your ultimate object, the love of character, though a valuable auxiliary, would not secure you from danger. How much less, when it is considered, that in the divine estima-



tion, your intentions and disposition are the only measure of good or ill desert.

Should you, as you doubtless will, on many occasions, be in danger of violating conscience by the sacrifice of duty to human applause, resort instantly for aid to reason and revealed truth: set before yourselves the immutability of the divine character and law; consider whether retrospection on the praise of mortals will silence a conscience, which imminent death has rendered tumultuous; and whether those, who have been, for many centuries, suffering a retribution, are now consoled by reflecting on the splendour or popularity of their crimes.

To seek reputation, not for its own sake, but for the benevolent purpose of rendering greater services to God and your country, is unquestionably an act of virtue. To this your obligations are as solemn and powerful, as to any other duty of benevolence or piety. Let me remind you, that reputation is a plant, delicate in its nature, and by no means rapid in its growth. It will not shoot up like the gourd, which shaded the prophet's head; but, like that same gourd, it may perish in a night.

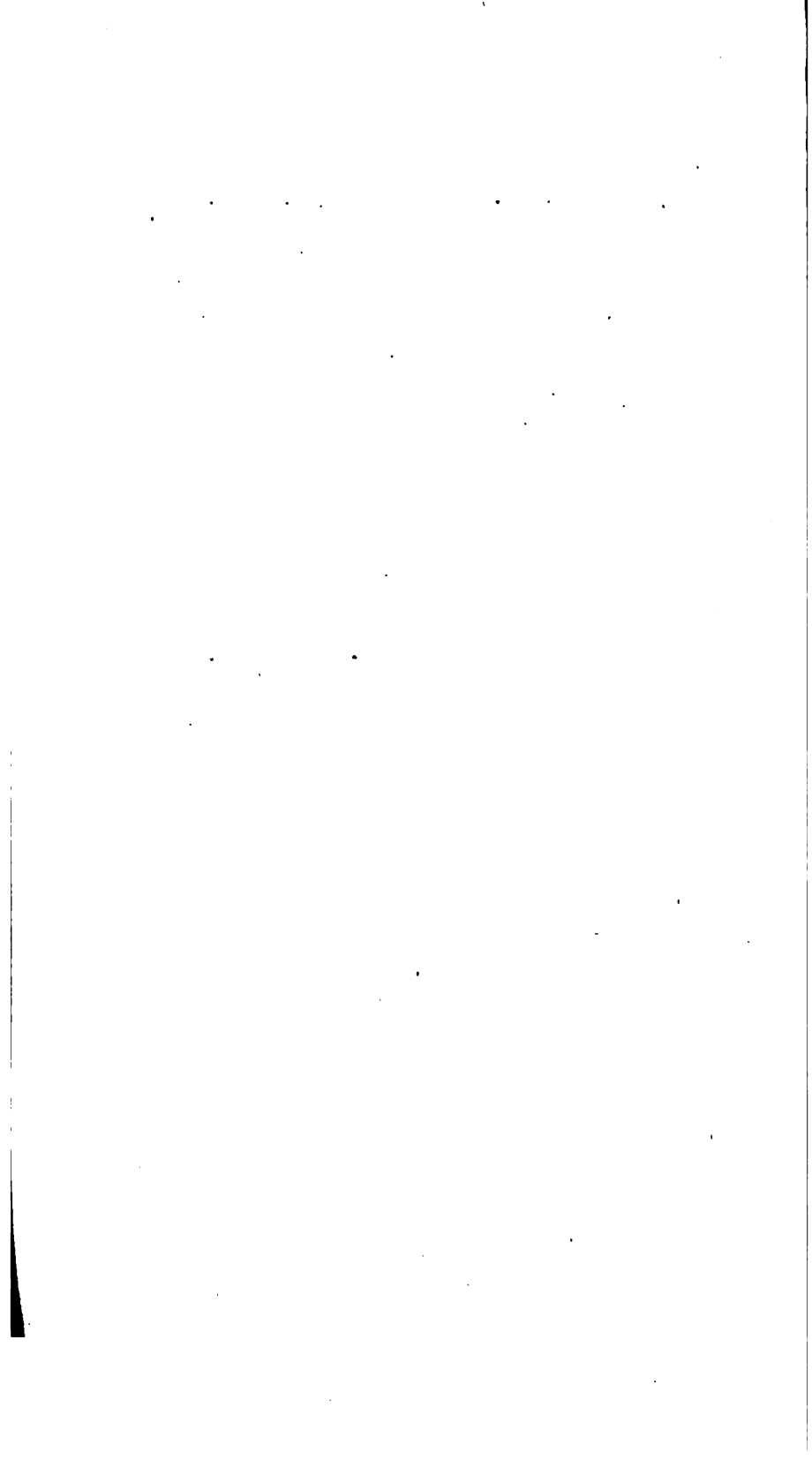
To secure solid and endless glory, a principle of moral rectitude is indispensable. In this there is vigour, uniformity, and duration. It varies not with human opinions. It is the same, whether it

appear in the beggar or the prince; in the man of rustic or cultivated manners. It is the same in deserts and in crowded cities,—in the camp and the pulpit, the work-shop and the forum. It is the same, whether on the earth beneath, or in the heavens above. If there are, in the extreme parts of the universe, intelligent beings, whom God views with approbation, they are influenced by the same principle, which governs virtuous men. No matter, what forms they possess. No matter, how many suns or systems lie between them, they belong to the same family :—there is an essential uniformity in their characters, and their motives, in their objects of love and aversion.

The principle, of which I am speaking, whether it be called benevolence, the love of order, fitness, or rectitude, is law not only to all *dependant* virtuous beings, but to their divine Sovereign. Under its influence he exerts his intelligence and power. It is this alone, which renders his own character lovely.

Young Gentlemen,—To urge your attention to religion, and to the scenes of an opening eternity, is a duty, which I owe to your parents and to you. At this anniversary, there are circumstances, which would render the omission peculiarly criminal. The grave has been recently opened to receive one from your number.\* He, who would have shared, with

\* Lewis Page of Readfield.



# ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1812.

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*Young Gentlemen,*

It has been long since remarked, by one, whose discernment has never been called in question, that “the constitution of human creatures is such, that they are capable of becoming qualified for states of life, for which they were once wholly unqualified.” The human mind, no less than the body, is susceptible of great changes, from the circumstances, in which it is placed, and from the attention and culture, which it receives. It is on these well known facts, that the whole system of education is founded ; and, in proportion as this susceptibility of change in the human mind, is greater or less, is the

importance of education decreased or augmented ; and in proportion to our belief of the alteration, which may be produced, either in the direction or strength of the different mental qualities, will be our cheerfulness and ardour in their cultivation.

The youth, who is easily persuaded, that he has received from nature a treacherous memory, esteems as fruitless, all endeavours to cherish or invigorate that power. If he finds in his fancy neither exuberance nor vivacity, despairing of eminence in any department in literature, in which imagination is required, he concludes that if success of any kind awaits him, it is to be met in those studies, in which the intellects are alone employed. If he finds, in relation to those sciences, in which numbers and quantities are concerned, less readiness, than is displayed by others of his own standing, he concludes, that the kind of talents, necessary for a mathematician has been denied him, and either abandons studies of this nature, or pursues them with hopeless indifference. For young gentlemen, who are either commencing or closing a collegiate life, it is, therefore, a matter of much importance to have just ideas, as to the command, which the mind has over its own powers; and not to attribute, to its original constitution, that, which is the fair result of circumstances and habit.

There is no faculty, perhaps, which is thought to be bestowed with greater inequality, than memory. And though I am far from asserting, that this is distributed to all men in equal portions, a little attention to your own intellectual habits, or to those of other persons, will convince you, that the power of treasuring up facts and bringing them into use, is less the gift of nature, than the result of mental discipline. It is not uncommon to find individuals, whose memories are astonishingly tenacious of particular facts, but whose ability to retain general knowledge does not exceed the ordinary kind. Now, it is incredible, that the memory should originally possess an aptness for retaining one particular description of ideas rather than another. He, who can treasure up anecdotes, and have them forever at hand, when wanted, will be able, with the same facility, to remember dates in chronology, facts in history, and proportions in geometry, whenever these subjects, whether by effort or casualty, become equally familiar or interesting. For a similar reason, he, who is able to write or to understand a well digested treatise on commerce, or politics, should never complain, that nature has denied him the power of understanding disquisitions in mathematics or ontology. At the present time indeed, it may be far more difficult for him to fix his attention on

some of these subjects, than on others ; and his success in the investigation of them will be proportionate. But this difficulty results, it may be, from habits, which took their rise from education, or other circumstances, foreign to the original structure of the mind. Whenever a subject is connected with ideas of advantage or self complacency, we give it a cordial welcome, however frequent may be its recurrence; and the greatest advances will doubtless be made in those studies, which give us most pleasure. If that employment, to which you have, at present, the greatest inclination, is likely to be as advantageous to the public, to your friends, and to yourselves, as a different pursuit, there is no reason, why it should not be adopted. The effort, requisite to produce a change in your present taste is, in that case, unnecessary. The attention, implied in such effort, would be better employed on those studies, which are the object of your choice. But, if your situation or connexions be such, as to render a particular institution of life decidedly more advantageous and suitable, than another, you need not be deterred from pursuing it, though your present taste should lead in a different direction: for, as this propensity is probably a matter of your own creation, or the result of circumstances, by a change in the latter, united to your own efforts, it may be an-

annihilated. But, whatever may be your profession, remember, that the cultivation of your mental powers, is a solemn duty, which you owe to Him, by whom they were bestowed. He has not left it to your option, whether to make the most, or the least of them. He *requires* you to do the former. And permit me to assure you, that the habits, whether of indolence or study, which you commence on leaving this seminary, will have no inconsiderable effect on your future characters.

From the early age, at which you have completed the usual course of college studies, you may imagine, that no material injury would arise from spending a few years, either in idleness, or, what is little better, in light reading, directed to no particular object. Be cautious how you indulge such an opinion. A few years, especially at your age, is a valuable part of human life. To waste these in mental inaction would be the worst kind of prodigality. In addition to this, habits of systematical application could not afterwards be resumed without great effort and resolution.

By reflecting on what is past, you may take encouragement, concerning the future. From the knowledge, which you have acquired in four years, estimate the acquisitions, which are possible to you in ten, twenty, or thirty. Besides, your intel-



lectual powers being more matured and better disciplined, you will be able to arrange your ideas with greater method,—to judge with more accuracy of what you read,—and to select with more discretion what ought to be retained.

As there is, belonging to the human mind, a variety of *powers*, and these bestowed by our Creator, we may be assured, that they are well adapted to each other; and, of course, while *one* is cultivated, the *rest* should by no means be neglected. This would be doing a kind of violence to our natures;—it would be to disarrange that order, and to disturb that proportion, which unerring wisdom has instituted. If there is one of these powers, whether memory, judgment, fancy, or imagination, which you suppose to be at present feebler, than the rest, wisdom requires, that by more than ordinary attention to it, you endeavour to remedy the present defect. If the *memory* retain with difficulty, store it with those ideas only, which are worth preserving. Endeavour to render these as interesting, as possible; and frequently recal them to the mind. Associate things difficult to be retained, with those, which you are in no danger of forgetting, that the recurrence of the one may be accompanied by the return of the other.

If you desire to add strength and acumen to

your *judgment*, be at pains to acquire clear and distinct ideas of the objects, concerning which it is to be employed. Minutely observe all circumstances, which should influence your conclusion. In this way, the artificer, the merchant, the physician, and the mineralogist, acquire, in their respective departments, an accuracy of judging, which, to others, has the appearance of intuition.

Nor are the fancy and imagination less subject to human control, or less susceptible of improvement, than other powers of the mind. If you accustom yourselves to trace the analogies, which a particular object bears to others, whenever you have occasion to discourse or to write concerning this object, these analogies will present themselves by the power of association, and will afford you an opportunity of forming such images, as may serve either for illustration or ornament. It will tend much to increase, both the vigour and correctness of your imagination, occasionally to peruse, with attention, standard works in poetry, whether of Grecian, Roman, or British origin. Such perusal, as it is necessary to the highest improvement of your mental powers, becomes a matter, not of convenience only, but of obligation.

I have made these remarks with the greater confidence both of their correctness and utility, supported, as many of them are, by an author, to whom

you have been recently attending; an author, whose unassuming manner, wonderful perspicacity, profound knowledge of his subject, and elegance, perhaps I might say, perfection of style, has given charm and brilliancy even to the subject of metaphysics.

If your *literary* character depends so much on circumstances, and your own efforts, you will not doubt, that in regard to your *moral* character, these are equally important. For both these reasons, be cautious with whom you associate. Cultivate the society of men of knowledge, and men of principle. Choose rather to be with those, whose intellectual and moral acquirements exceed your own, than with those, from whom you have nothing to learn. There cannot be conceived a more depraved ambition, than that of being chieftain of a clan, composed of the ignorant, disorderly, and profligate. The sentiment, "*Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven,*" is fit only for that being, to whom it has been attributed by the poet. It is sufficient honour for a young gentleman, and such he ought to esteem it, to be admitted to the society of literary and virtuous men. In conversation with such, or with others, give your own opinion but sparingly; and never on subjects, with which you are unacquainted;—least of all should it be done in language, positive or assuming. To retract an erroneous opinion modestly ex-

pressed, will give you little or no mortification. But to acknowledge an error, which you have boldly asserted, will cost you a painful effort ; and your positiveness will excite, according to the temper of your opponent, either pity, contempt, or irritation.

Some persons consider it, as a point of honour to defend every sentiment, which they advance, however hastily formed, or how little soever they are conversant with the subject, to which it relates. Nothing can more clearly indicate both the want of talents and want of integrity. If you are conscious of possessing talents, you will not fear their being called in question, either because you are unable to show that to be true, which is not so ; or because another person, who has attended to a subject, more than yourself, understands it better.

I could not be justified in closing this address, without introducing the subject of your relations to God and a future state.

It seems, at present, to be a well established opinion in philosophy, that there is no other connexion between cause and effect, than coincidence of time : that all motion, whether in celestial, animal, or vegetable bodies, is not to be attributed to any power, inherent in matter, but to an immediate, divine agency. The bearing, which the doctrine has upon religion, is most important. The Divinity is

not only around you, but is immediately operating throughout your whole animal system. His agency was not more direct, when he said, *Let there be light, and there was light* ; or when Jesus exclaimed, *Lazarus, come forth*, than it now is in the beating of your pulse, the motion of your limbs, or the expansion of your lungs. In the most emphatical sense, is it true, that *in Him we live, and move, and have our being*. With the same emphasis may we pronounce, that *He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will*.

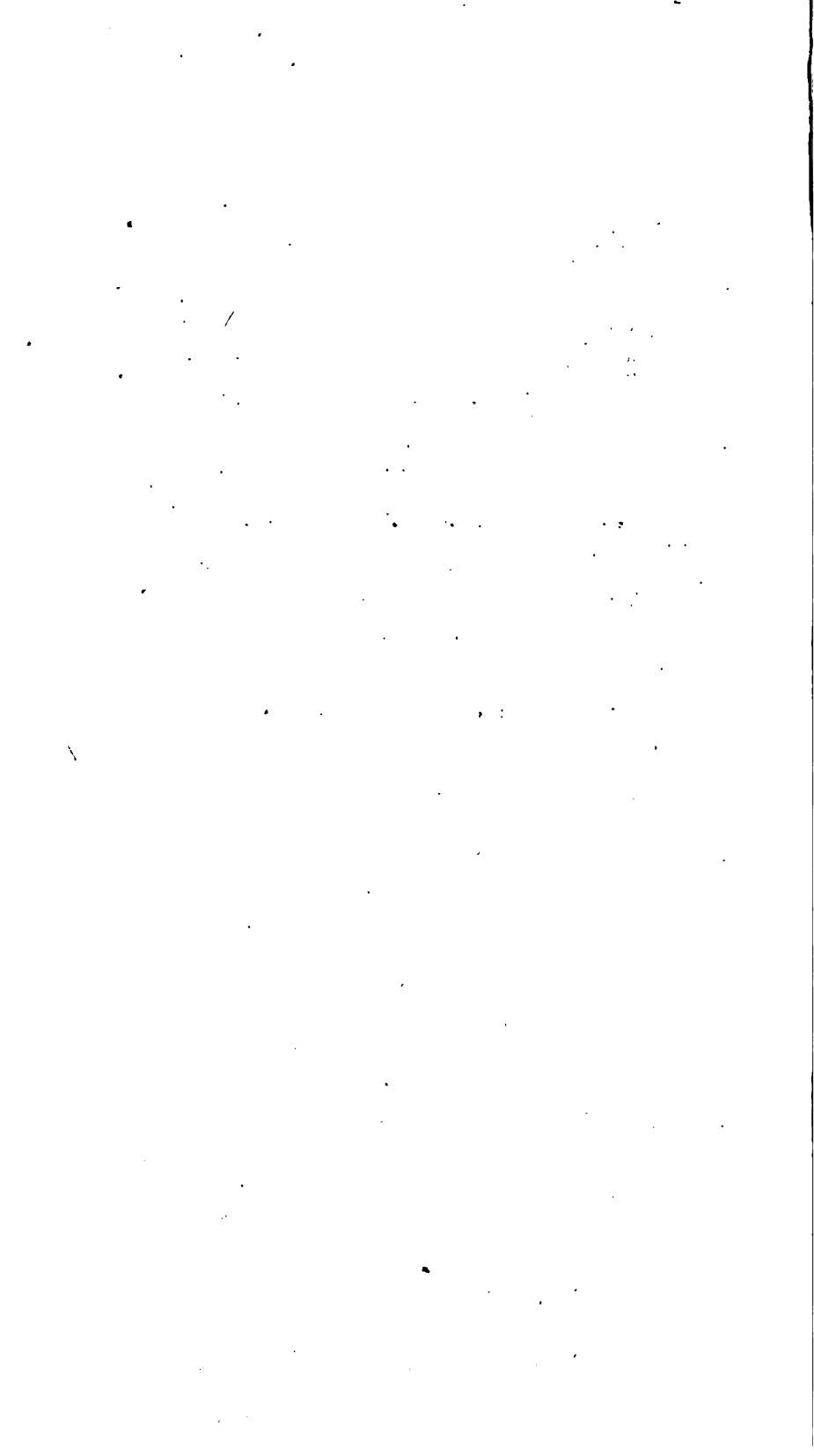
Now, if the divine care is not, for a moment, intermitted in regard to the plants of the field, or the trees of the forest ;—if Deity interests himself in the minutest parts of your animal system, is it possible to imagine him indifferent to your character, and moral feelings? Those notices of God, which every object in nature is constantly presenting, will therefore be forever troublesome to a mind, conscious of hostility to his moral attributes. To the good man, on the contrary, all the objects of nature afford pledges of security and eternal life, as they indicate the care and agency of a friend, omniscient and almighty.

“The meanest flow’ret of the vale,  
The simplest note, that swells the gale,  
The common sun, the air, the skies,  
To him are opening paradise.”

So far, as you either oppose, or neglect religion, you are at warfare with reason, with moral feelings, and with God.

The moment you deserve the name of Christians, this conflict terminates, your heart and intellects are reconciled, and you have identified your interest with that of your Maker.

Young Gentlemen,—I wish for each of you a character, formed on the principles of christianity. I wish for each one of you as much wealth, and influence, and honour, as are consistent with your highest moral elevation, and with your final enjoyment of that crown, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall confer on his saints, at the day of his appearing.



## ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1813.

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*Young Gentlemen,*

**F**ROM receiving the honours, to which, by your habits and proficiency in science, you are now entitled, I will detain you but a short time, by those observations, which have occurred to me, on harmony of character.

Whatever be the design in painting or poetry, whether to excite emotions of gloominess or joy, we expect to find, and are dissatisfied at not finding such objects, and such combinations, as, either by their nature, or by the connexion, in which they stand, contribute to the intended effect. If, in the group of objects thus collected, any are found of discordant qualities ; if, in a scene, designed to pro-



duce joy, any objects are intermixed, tending to excite grief or gloominess ; or if, in a scene, designed to excite the latter emotions, we discover any thing gay or ludicrous, the discovery never fails, not only to obstruct the general effect, but likewise to produce pain.

These remarks are introduced, for the purpose of illustrating those, in which we are more interested.

As the general beauty of the natural world consists much in that variety, which is constituted by objects, adapted to different purposes ; so the beauty and happiness of civil society depend, in no small degree, on that variety of character, which is the result of different pursuits, or of having in view different objects. And as beauty in painting, architecture, or poetry, in natural or artificial scenery, consists much in the parts being so formed and adjusted, as to contribute to that general effect, which is the apparent object of the work ; so the beauty of a particular character is greatly heightened, when all its parts are discovered to be subservient to that object, whose accomplishment is intended. Professions or employments in life, whose immediate objects are very different, may, notwithstanding, in an equal degree, contribute both to individual and public happiness.

In the election, which you make, it is not permitted to consult your own, much less your temporal advantage exclusively. Not only divine wisdom, but uninspired philosophy has taught us, that we are not born for ourselves, but that, as all the fruits of the earth are produced for the sake of man, so are men created for each other. In a matter so important as the choice of a profession, on which your future cast of character and standing in society will greatly depend, your best judgment is to be deliberately employed. But when a choice is thus made ; —when you have determined on that institution of life, in which, you believe, can be best answered the great purpose, for which life was given,—to that let your efforts, your studies, and your habits be accommodated. I know, indeed, that to some favoured individuals, Heaven has been pleased to impart intellectual powers, so rich and various, as to enable them to become well versed in the science of different professions, and to acquire, in addition to this, an extensive acquaintance with most of those subjects, which are open to human investigation. To them may be applied the praise, lately bestowed on a British statesman, “There is not a subject presented to him, even casually, in which his ability is not conspicuous.”

But persons of this description are so uncom-

mon, and when they do appear, are so marked out for their high destination, that men of usual, or even very respectable talents, are wholly without excuse for mistaking themselves to be of this number. The rays of ordinary genius falling intensely on one point, will make some impression; whereas, if diffused over a large surface, they will scarcely be felt. If, therefore, you determine on a profession, determine at the same time, to make the most of your talents in that profession.

I do not advise you thus, because in the course here prescribed, ambition is most sure to be gratified, though such unquestionably is the fact.; but because I am persuaded, that generally speaking, the interests of society are best promoted, when individual attention is much directed to individual objects. If, for example, the happiness of those around you will be advanced by your cultivating the healing art, it will still more be advanced, if, in that art, you become skilful. If duty requires you to become a counsellor or advocate, it requires you to qualify yourself for giving good counsel, and for making an able defence.

If duty directs you to be a soldier, it likewise directs you to cultivate not only personal courage, but a systematic acquaintance with the science of war. And if you have reason to believe, that the divine

Author of our most holy religion requires you to unfold its doctrines and enforce its precepts, can you doubt the obligation lying on you to do this, in the most interesting, judicious, and powerful manner? It is, indeed, almost a contradiction to allow, that any profession contributes to the virtue and happiness of men, unless we, at the same time, allow, that eminence in such professions, would, in a higher degree, accomplish this object. It is, without question, your duty to cultivate all the powers of the human mind, and not only to retain, but augment those general acquirements, which you have already made. What I wish to inculcate is, the importance of bringing all these to bear upon that institution of life, which, on taking an enlightened view of your own powers, and the wants of society, you shall deliberately and conscientiously choose.

To effect this, that is, to render your present and future acquisitions tributary to one leading object, will be easy, just in proportion to the interest and ardour, which that object excites. By ardent and intense application to a subject, you obtain a knowledge, not only of its more obvious, but of its more remote relations; and, when any thing is represented either to the eye, the ear, or the understanding, which may have even a slight bearing on such a subject, the mind will seize upon it, with incredible facility and readiness.

But it may still be asked, whether the great design of our existence, which is to secure our own happiness and to promote that of others, can be as well answered by devoting the mind to one object, as by dividing it among many.

As to the first, viz. personal enjoyment, so far as it depends on the kind of pursuit, I appeal to you, whether those who are strongly attached to their profession, or to any particular departments in science, do not appear to be more happy on that very account.

As to the second, that is, the happiness of others, the case is still more clear. Eminence in a profession is important, we have seen, for the same reason, which renders the profession important. If the interests of society require one, they likewise require the other. And that eminence is to be attained only by concentrating the mind, cases of extraordinary genius being excepted, is too obvious to need proof. And further, as to making discoveries in science, or illustrating them, these are generally the result of attention, directed to a particular object, or department. But if the discovery be made, it is immaterial, whether by one person, or twenty, as it is henceforward held among scientific men, as common property, and its application to the purposes of life becomes general. In

fine, if the common arts of life are carried to a greater perfection by a division of labour, than if every man should undertake to fabricate for himself, his utensils, clothing, and furniture; and if the former be more favourable than the latter to the happiness of human society, it undeniably follows, as a general truth, that those, who embrace any one of what are called the learned professions, will, by assiduous attention to it, best discharge the debt, which they owe to the public.

Nor need you be under any apprehension lest the method here prescribed, should contract the mind, by confining its powers. For the more ardently and thoroughly you study a profession, the more numerous will its relations appear, and the greater, by consequence, will be the number of objects, which may be rendered subservient to it.

I would, by no means, encourage you to form romantic or extravagant expectations. But there is no propriety in a young man's aiming at a point of excellence, to which persons of his condition and talents have not usually attained; because the best use is seldom made of all the powers, which are given. An elevated stand, constantly in view, will stimulate to corresponding efforts. "To the exaggerated conception of eloquence, which perpetually revolved in the mind of Cicero," I use the words

of an author, with whom you are all familiar, "to that idea, which haunted his thoughts, of *ali-quid immensum infinitumque* ; we are indebted for "some of the most splendid displays of human genius; and it is probable, that something of the "same kind has been felt by every man, who has "risen much above the level of humanity, either in "speculation or action."

In addition to the preceding remarks, I would observe, that different shades of character, are formed not only by different professions, but likewise by different offices and situations in life ; and though the rules of morality are the same to all men, there are certain things of minor consideration, in regard to which, precisely the same deportment is not in all men equally proper. That, which in one character passes without any just animadversion, would not in another be thought either prudent or decorous. Attention to times, places, and circumstances is as essential to that harmony of character, without which no person, whether in conspicuous or obscure life, can accomplish all that good, which is placed within his power. Your obligation, therefore, to regard decency and propriety, even in respect to actions, in themselves indifferent, becomes in this view of the matter strictly moral. So thought St. Paul, who inculcates on his disciples *whatsoever things are of good report*.

But, though it is suitable, that there should be, in this life, a diversity in human pursuits, and the distinct parcels of character, so to speak, should be selected and arranged, in such a manner, as to produce a consistent and uniform whole, the particular characters, thus produced, are to be made strictly subservient to a more general object; I mean the glory of God, and the happiness and virtue of mankind.

In building a palace or a temple, the various parts are assigned to different hands; the immediate object is to finish that part, which is allotted to each. But, the ultimate and grand design being to complete the edifice, each part becomes important no otherwise, than as it contributes to the strength, symmetry, and beauty of the whole. The obligations of man as a rational and free agent, are, in no degree, dependant on his office, his rank, or employment. Particular actions become duties according to the varieties of human life; but, as to moral feelings, as to the end, which men are bound to pursue, religion, whether natural or revealed, admits no diversity. It is the same to him, whose brow is encircled by the diadem, and to him, who roams the forest, and seeks shelter among its rocks and caverns. It is the same to him, who commands armies, and him, who, to use the language of a christian poet,



“—Trains to glorious war

The sacramental host of God's elect.”

Whether your lives be spent in action or study, you owe them to God, and to those interests of virtue, and order, which are now protected, and will be finally secured, by the perfections of his nature. Harmony of character will never be perfect, nor very extensive, until there be a fixed, moral principle; a cordial, as well as intellectual assent to the christian religion. Determine not to violate the principles of reason and virtue. Whatever objects appear themselves to your judgment, as permanently valuable, let them be pursued with inflexible resolution. Dispel that mist, which gives unnatural magnitude to things present, and prevents any distinct vision of that which is future. The present will soon be past, and the future will be present.

As by retiring from academic walls, and presenting yourselves some what more conspicuously in the view of society, your sphere of action will be enlarged, permit me to remind you, that the period will soon arrive, when you will be introduced to scenes vastly more important and extensive.

Though the term of human probation is so short, that, on earth we scarcely commence our being, yet, even in this state, we form a character, to which eternity itself will but give enlargement, and durability.

In your progress through life, you are permitted to cherish hope, but are not allowed to make presumptuous calculations on the years to come. In the premature death of an instructor,\* on whose whole deportment, religion shed a lustre, mild, and clear, and beneficent; to whose memory friendship has, this day, delighted to bring her copious offerings, we have had a painful comment on the words of inspiration, *Thou destroyest the hope of man*. But as believers in revealed religion, as disciples of Him, who is the resurrection and the life, we are encouraged to direct our eyes to the Hill of Zion, on which grows neither the yew nor the cypress.

Young Gentlemen,—We wish to see, in your characters, all those qualities, which are essential to our natures, mingled and softened, invigorated or restrained by the potent influence of christian piety. Be kind and affectionate without weakness; humble without servility; and prudent without duplicity and artifice. Maintain an independent spirit and unsullied integrity, without offensive and boisterous manners. Discharge your duty to society without being contaminated by its vices. Cultivate a temper uniformly cheerful, resulting from reflection, and not from the want of it; a cheerfulness, produced by

\* Frederic Southgate, A. B. Tutor, who died May 29, 1812.

a firm confidence in the wisdom, beneficence, and activity of that power, by which the universe is governed. Recognise this power in every occurrence, and not less in the fading of a leaf, than in the fall of an empire. Commence and maintain a life of christian virtue, and rest assured, that, whatever changes may await you on earth, and whatever untried scenes may be presented in that state, which is now invisible, *neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, shall separate you from the love of God.*

## ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1814.

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*Young Gentlemen,*

IN the composition of human beings, we distinguish the body, the intellects, and the heart. The cultivation of these, demands our attention in proportion to their respective importance. Of *bodily powers*, agility and physical strength are the principal, if not the only constituents. By the *intellects* we perceive, compare, abstract, and form conclusions. Their province extends to moral, not less than to other relations. Moral ideas, together with their relations, are as truly objects of intellect, as are ideas of number or quantity. Perceiving these relations, we discern the reality of duty and the fitness of actions. But though the obligations of virtue

are discerned by the understanding, the understanding is not the seat of moral virtue. There is no conceivable state of the intellects, of which we can predicate either virtue or vice. Moral dispositions or affections are distinct from the understanding; and, in these consist whatever, in accountable beings, is worthy of praise or blame.

On this distinction are grounded those few remarks, which the present interesting occasion gives me an opportunity of addressing to you, relative to that union, which ought ever to be maintained between *piety and good morals* on the one hand, and *literature and science* on the other. Mind, however capacious, if perverted, does not raise its possessor, so much above brute animals, as it leaves him inferior to the man of moral goodness.

So long as the moral character is debased, I know not whether it is desirable, that the intellects should be improved. Knowledge gives power, which is injurious or beneficent, according to the manner, in which it is used. Physical strength will be dangerous, if guided by brute impulse; but infinitely more so, if under the direction of intellects perverted. Give to the tiger human sagacity, and, after having desolated the forest, he will invade the habitations of men, and form a wilderness for himself in the midst of rich plantations or populous

cities. Give to Leviathan intellects, proportionate to his bodily powers, and navies will no longer dare to traverse the ocean.

But you may ask, whether, reason does not applaud virtue ; and whether the latter will not be cherished, in proportion as the former is improved ? I answer, that reason does unquestionably applaud virtue ; and, the more the science of ethics is studied, and the relations of man examined, the more clearly will appear the reality and strength of those obligations, which bind man to the Author of his being. But, particular subjects may be neglected, while the intellectual powers in general are highly cultivated. The use, made of the intellects, will depend on the moral character. If that be corrupt, there will probably be a disinclination to those subjects, which lead to conclusions, unfolding either the turpitude or the consequences of vice. In the character of a man of study, it is no more implied, that he is versed in the theory of morals, than that he is an adept in botany, mathematics, or political economy. Gross ignorance of moral truths is sometimes betrayed by those, who, in many of the walks of science, have left ordinary men far behind ; and the obligations and duties of life are not only better discharged, but as well understood by the unlettered cottager, as by some, whose time has been assidu-

only devoted to study. With the former, morality may have been the only subject of investigation. With the other, it may be among the few, which have been overlooked.

But, with whatever attention or success the science of virtue may have been explored, the reality is a distinct object; and between the two there is no necessary or invariable connexion. Most evidently, therefore, you are not to take it for granted, that the heart is meliorating, because the memory may be strengthened, the powers of discernment rendered more acute, and the imagination enlivened. The Greeks and Romans gave to the human intellect, perhaps, as high a polish, as it is capable of receiving. But, if we inquire for a pure morality, we are referred to the Scythians, or back to the time, when Saturn himself had not assumed the visage of manhood. Those very periods, in which literary taste was refined even to fastidiousness, were distinguished by moral insensibility, and by multiplied acts of atrocious cruelty, not less than by licentiousness, the most unlimited and the most disgusting. Many among the celebrated relicks of antiquity, it is well known, are monuments at once of the cultivated talents, and moral degradation of their authors and their age. Even philosophical studies, which, more than all others, might be ex-

pected to subdue the passions and reclaim the irregularities of the heart, have been found inadequate to the object. You will not learn temperance of Arcesilaus or Lacidas, nor the contempt of pleasure from Aristippus.

It being certain, that the cultivation of the intellectual powers does not necessarily imply virtue, either in principle or practice, I request you to look attentively at the different effects on civil society, produced by literature and science, as they are combined or not with sentiments of religion. To whom is the cause of social order and human happiness most indebted,—to such philosophers as Boudanger, Cordorcet, and Dupuis, or to Locke, Newton, and Sir William Jones? None of these distinguished characters lived without effect. The influence of their example and writings has been discovered in families:—it has been felt in deliberate assemblies, by nations, and by the whole civilized world. In regard to the latter, their wonderful powers were employed either directly or indirectly to establish those great principles, which lie at the foundation of religion, both natural and revealed. Whether they investigated the laws of mind or of matter, they considered them, as originating with an intelligent Lawgiver, of whose existence and agency they discovered new evidence, in proportion, as they passed



beyond the boundaries, by which human knowledge had been previously circumscribed. In the victories, which they gained over ignorance and error, they dedicated their richest spoils to the Author of nature, "the knowledge and veneration of whom," says Mr. Locke, "is the chief end of all our thoughts, and the proper business of all our understandings."

It is surprising, with what facility, we make almost every subject tributary to that, with which our minds are most deeply impressed. Who would expect to find the truths of revelation corroborated by the study of Heathen Mythology, or by researches into the history of the modern Orientals? Yet I need not repeat the name of that illustrious scholar and statesman, who, through such a medium, "saw the star of Christ in the East, and fell down to worship him."

But atheistic philosophers have been even more assiduous in propagating infidelity, than christian philosophers to establish and diffuse religion. "They who do not love religion," says Mr. Burke, "hate it. The rebels to God perfectly abhor the Author of their being. He never presents himself to their thoughts, but to menace and alarm them. They cannot strike the sun out of heaven: but they are able to raise a smouldering smoke, that ob-

"scores him from their own eyes." With these feelings, their opposition to christianity can hardly be expected to restrain itself, whatever be the subject, on which they write. Whether their literary labours are directed to metaphysics, history, or natural philosophy, occasions are dexterously improved, of infusing doubts into the reader, or of diminishing his practical sense of the value of revelation. For this purpose, both the surface and the bowels of the earth have been explored: the very regularity of celestial motion has been adduced to prove it the result of no designing agent; and impious men have endeavoured to persuade us, that even in the path of the Zodiac, there is a shining host, ready marshalled to contend with the Almighty.

If you have any doubts of the effects, resulting from talents and science, unconnected with moral sentiments and feelings, consider what has rendered the European continent, for the last twenty years, a scene of misery, revolution, and war. Men of depraved character, possessing that influence, which strong powers, science, and an enterprising, restless temper seldom fail to bestow, diffused over Europe that spirit of atheism and misrule, which has strewed with mighty ruins the fairest part of the globe. *The four winds have, indeed, striven on the great*

deep: and though the tempest is hushed, and the surges are now subsiding, we behold, on a widely extended ocean, the fragments of scattered navies, and many human beings struggling between life and death.

*Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto*

*Arma virum, tabulæq; et Troia gaza per undas.*

The same effects in a proportionate degree, will be produced, wherever the understanding is cultivated, and the fruits of the heart are permitted to shoot up in the wildness of nature. What infidels of uncommon powers have accomplished in the courts of princes, or in the mass of a nation, others of ordinary growth may achieve in their own vicinity or village.

I have been led to make these remarks, for the sake of placing in a strong light the importance of combining literary with moral improvement; and from no apprehension, that any, to whom I speak, are inclined to speculative infidelity. But the standing, which your education will give you in society, will place it in your power to aid the interests of virtue or vice, in other methods, than either directly defending or opposing the christian religion. These interests will be affected by the greater or less solemnity, with which you treat the subjects of religion in general,—the regard, which you man-

test for its institutions,—the attention, or neglect, with which you treat its professors and advocates; but especially by your sensibility to those moral restraints, which it imposes on human conduct.

There is another point of view, in which the importance of uniting religion with your studies, will be further apparent. A very elegant and perspicacious inquirer into the philosophy of mind, has mentioned among the advantages derived from the reading of fictitious narratives, “that by exhibitions of characters a little elevated above the common standard, they have a tendency to cultivate the taste in life; to quicken our disgust at what is mean or offensive, and to form the mind insensibly to elegance and dignity.” Now, if it tends to purify and elevate the mind, to contemplate fictitious representations of human excellence, to how much greater extent, as well as more certainly and constantly, will the similar effect be produced by the habitual contemplation of an ever present and immutable God!—a character, which, to use the language of a living author, “borrows splendour from all, that is fair, subordinates to itself all, that is great, and sits enthroned on the riches of the universe.”\*

Nor ought it to escape your notice, that the strongest motives to cultivate both the intellectual

\* Hall.

and moral powers, are involved in the belief, that we shall exist; and become immortal beyond the grave. If you, who now possess the powers and execute the functions of intelligent agents, are, by the next fever or the next casualty to be extinguished forever,—if there be nothing in you, which the fire cannot consume, nor the worm devour, there is, indeed, less excitement to laborious study. For who would take much pains to trim a taper, which shines but for a moment, and can never be lighted again? But, if mind is capable of endless progression in knowledge,—endless approximations to the Supreme Intelligence,—if, in the midst of unremitting success, objects of new interest will forever be presented, what prospects are opened to the view of man! what strong inducements to application and research!

Few scenes of more solemn interest, I think, are ever exhibited on earth, than that, which is presented in the last moments of a profligate man, possessing learning and talents. It is an obvious dictate of reason, not less than of revelation, that men are *accountable for what they have*. In these circumstances, his mind recognises two sources of alarm. It contemplates the things, which have been done, and those, which have been omitted. In that large sphere, in which minds of this description

are designed to move, it finds nothing, on which to repose with pleasure. Neither by precept nor example have the duties of morality and the solemnity of religion been enforced. All that influence, which he might have had on the side of order, and virtue, and piety, has received an opposite direction. In the contemplations of those around him, ideas of a lax morality, of talents, and erudition, have been most unhappily associated. Many, who respected him for the latter qualities, have been consoled under the lashes of conscience, and confirmed in vice, by the authority of his example. For the evil done, and the good neglected, he is now required to account before the Eternal !

Young Gentlemen,—A very few years will now fix the character, which you are to sustain through life. Those, further advanced in age, are often surprised at the rapidity, with which the habits and feelings of the collegian are exchanged for those of the citizen. We witness young men, taking leave of the places of their education, and, if habits of regularity and diligence are formed, we are soon reminded of *our own* progress in years, by recognising them in the pulpit, at the bar, or on the bench. The blossoms are scarcely fallen, before the fruit is seen swelling into ripeness.

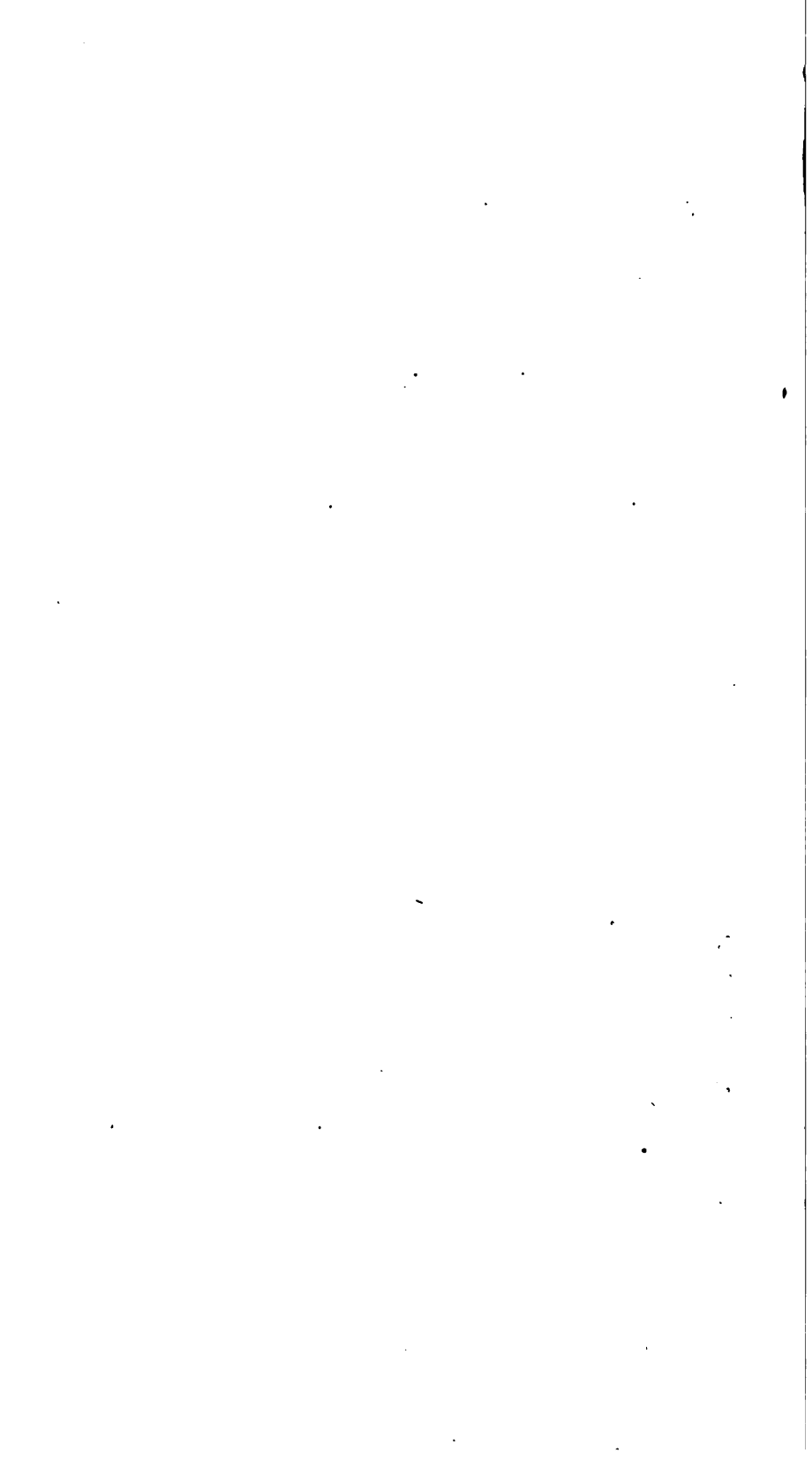
In this address I have had occasion to observe, that the mind is enlarged and elevated by the habitual contemplation of an object, so full of splendour and majesty, as the Supreme Being. But the effect hereby produced, is less important on the intellectual powers, than on the heart. On your moral resemblance to Him depends, not only your usefulness in life, but your security or ruin through all the periods of unmeasured duration. Towards Him let your views be habitually directed, with reverence, humility, and hope.

To establish an intercourse between heaven and earth, and to diffuse over this world, something of that light, which encircles the divine majesty, *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men : they beheld his glory, the glory, as of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.* You cannot duly appreciate this religion, even as a system of duties and motives, without contemplating that palpable gloom, which had, for ages, enshrouded the world. But I will not, on this occasion, repeat remarks, which your course of education has rendered familiar. My object is less to eulogize christianity, than to leave on your minds a practical sense of the connexion, which it has with your peace, your honour, and salvation. In the spirit of this holy religion, and relying on the atonement and intercession of its

**Author, may you, amidst all the changes of human affairs, but especially at the present interesting moment, prefer to Heaven the poet's prayer.**

**" Father of light and life ! Thou Good Supreme !  
O teach me what is good ! Teach me Thyself !  
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,  
From every low pursuit ! And feed my soul  
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure ;  
Sacred, substantial, never fading bliss !"**





# ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1815.

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*Young Gentlemen,*

In all those parts of the universe, which are subject to human remark, we recognise the effects of divine legislation. That there are certain laws, agreeably to which all changes in the material world are effected, is acknowledged by atheists; the inconsistency of admitting laws without a lawgiver notwithstanding. It is no more denied by the infidel, than by the religious philosopher, that similar causes uniformly produce similar results.

If Deity has suffered no particle of matter, however worthless, to exist, uncontrolled by laws, it will hardly be questioned, that intelligent beings have some kind of designation; in other words, that the object of their existence will be answered by

their proceeding in a particular course, and frustrated should they pursue the opposite. Gravitation is not more a law to material objects, than virtue is to all beings, who are capable of it.

I know not that the present occasion can be better improved, than by addressing you on the immutable, independent nature of moral obligation; or of that virtue, which results from a compliance with it. "Morality," to use the words of an able writer, "is fixed on an immoveable basis, and appears not to be, in any sense, factitious, or the arbitrary production of any power, human or divine; but equally everlasting and necessary with all truth and reason."

When it is asserted, that morality is not the production of any power, human or divine, we do not deny, that those persons reason conclusively, as well as reverently, who infer the rectitude of a measure from the fact of its having been adopted by Deity;—because, being previously assured of his moral perfections; that is, of his infinite attachment to the eternal rules of truth, goodness, and justice, we conclude with unwavering confidence, that no particular act of his can violate these rules. In this however, it is by no means implied, that the standard of moral rectitude is factitious, or dependant on the will of any being whatever. The recti-

tade of actions does not depend on their proceeding from one being or another ; but on their coincidence with the immutable principles of virtue. Almost all men think, with good reason, that they speak honourably of the Supreme Being, when they say, that all his measures are taken because they are right. Now this language implies, that there is, independent of all will, such a thing as right and wrong. If I say of the vernal forest, it is *green*, or of the sun, it is *luminous*, I assert nothing, unless I affix some ideas to those epithets.

The immutable principles of morality necessarily result, we believe, from the nature of things, and from the relation, which they have one to another. As God is the author of all things, the relation, subsisting between them, may be considered, as depending on Him. But, while objects continue, in all respects, as they are, no change can be produced in their relations. A figure, which is now a square, may be turned into a circle. But, while it continues a square, it must have the relations of such a figure. Now, it is just as absurd to ascribe to Deity the power of changing vice into virtue, or virtue into vice, as to speak of his giving to a globe, so continuing, the properties and relations of a cube ; or to speak of his making a whole, which is less than the sum of all its parts.

So certain it is, that the reality of moral obligation, or the distinction between virtue and vice, is not the creature of power, that were we to make the most absurd of all suppositions, viz. that there is no Intelligent Author of the universe, even then a distinction between right and wrong, and consequent obligation would still remain. Without investigating our origin, we are found to be in a situation, in which, by pursuing certain courses, we may contribute much both to the happiness of ourselves and others; and that, by following an opposite course, we can render both ourselves and them sufficiently wretched. Now, were the will of no Supreme Being consulted, nor any future retribution anticipated, I appeal to your understanding, whether it would not be right for a man to live in such a manner, as to render society regular and tranquil, and himself and others happy, rather than to form such dispositions and habits, as would produce misery in his own breast, and diffuse it among those around him? I would ask further, whether such a person, perceiving one course to be right, and another to be wrong, would not be under obligation to adopt the one and avoid the other?—whether this obligation would not be fastened upon him in every connexion, which he might form, and in every stage of life?

Some actions and feelings are intrinsically, or inde-

pendently of consequences, wrong. Others are in like manner right. No circumstances can make malignity right, nor benevolence wrong. No consequences can render it fit, that two opposite moral characters should, on the whole, be treated alike. No supposed utility can render it right for innocence to be oppressed, or crimes rewarded.

Whatever it is impossible to conceive not to exist, is said to exist necessarily. On this principle we prove, that a distinction in moral actions is necessary, and therefore immutable. For, you can no more conceive the annihilation of this distinction, than the nonexistence of space or duration. But, when, in addition to this abstract view of the subject, we find a Being, in whom moral perfection is actually exhibited ;—a Being, in whom the principles of virtue are, so to speak, embodied ; when this Being bursts upon our astonished sight, not only as a pattern for our imitation, but as a judge, to decide on our character and destiny, the moral edifice assumes a new appearance ; it exhibits not only solidity and proportion, but splendour and awful sublimity.

Deity acknowledges the eternal distinction between right and wrong, by making it the basis of his own administration. His *throne is established in righteousness*. He proposes it to all created intelli-

gences, as the criterion, by which *their* characters are to be estimated, and his own treatment of them to be regulated.

I am not insensible, that the obligations of virtue have, by some, been resolved into an affair of expedience or utility ;—and that whatever is useful, has been pronounced, as therefore right.

The nature of virtue is doubtless the same in all beings, who possess it. It would follow, then, from the principle just mentioned, that the Almighty, and all creatures, so far as they imitate his moral rectitude, hesitate at no means, by which a result, finally advantageous can be accomplished. It is readily acknowledged, that the greatest happiness of the universe, which can be effected consistently with justice to each individual, and the unchangeable rules of truth and goodness, is a motive to action, than which, so far as we are able to judge, nothing can be more worthy of the Supreme Being. But, that such an object should be pursued independently of these limitations ; or, that moral rectitude should have no other basis than general utility, is a position, which surely ought not to be readily adopted. Such principles in morality would introduce universal uncertainty and distrust. No confidence could, on this ground, be placed in the promise of any being whatever ; as any government, whether

human or divine would be justified in deceiving, nay, would be morally bound to deceive, when greater utility might be thereby promoted. And beings of enlarged views may see that to be useful, which other beings do not. Therefore, my not seeing, that a deception practised on me would be useful on the whole, does not prove that it would not, and consequently that it may not happen.

But even were it allowed, that all the moral perfections of God are absorbed in his regard to utility, we should still utterly deny, that creatures with powers so limited, and understanding so darkened as ours, should be able from this principle, to infer their duty, or deduce any thing resembling a correct series of moral actions. "Even men of the soundest and most penetrating understanding," says an elegant Metaphysician, "might frequently be led to the perpetration of enormities, if they had no other light to guide them, but what they derived from their own uncertain anticipations of futurity. And when we consider how small the number of *such* men is, in comparison of those, whose judgments are perverted by the *prejudices* of education, or their own *selfish* passions, it is easy to see what a scene of *anarchy* the world would become."

There is, indeed, something palpably absurd in the very thought of our being called upon, many



times perhaps in the course of a single day, to decide upon the interests of the universe ;—to determine whether it will be most conducive to the happiness of all orders of beings, who now exist, or may exist hereafter, that we should observe our promises or violate them,—that we should indulge our passions or restrain them. Our Creator has not placed us under the necessity of entering into such hopeless calculations. He has rendered us capable of perceiving, that fraud, cruelty, oppression, and impiety, are essentially wrong ; and that the opposite qualities are, independently of consequences, entitled to the approbation and eager pursuit of all rational beings.

We are not, as has been believed by most pagans, whether ancient or modern, scintillations, struck off from the mass of Infinite Intelligence, hereafter to be reabsorbed, and thus to lose our individual existence. We exist as individuals. And though we sustain, indeed, the most important relation to other beings, virtue and vice, reward and punishment must still be personal. We can never be identified with the universe, as the falling drops of rain are absorbed in the ocean.

The great principles of rectitude, so deeply inscribed on the human understanding,—so universally acknowledged to be just, however practically disre-

garded ;—these great principles I would represent to you, as the massy pillars, on which is supported that moral government, to which all intelligent beings owe subjection. “ This law,” it has been observed; “ is not the creature of will, but necessary and immutable ; not local or temporary, but of equal extent and antiquity with the divine mind ; not dependant on power, but the guide of all power.” It is, indeed, that same law, which Jesus Christ came into the world to *magnify and to make honourable*.

The worth, young gentlemen, not only of your characters, but of your existence, depends on your attention to this law. No possible reverses of condition,—no transitions, whether in the present, or any future state, can render you dishonourable, if you are sincerely attached to it. Nor, while negligent of it, can present affluence, or success, or popularity make you truly respectable, nor long esteemed so. By loving and regarding this, will be formed that virtue of character, which will endure through height and depth. Not like those sickly plants, which can flourish only, while there is nothing to annoy them, it resembles the oak, which braves the tempest on the mountain’s top.

Permit me, on this occasion, to impress on your minds, the *universality* of this law. It is binding on

a man, not because he occupies a conspicuous place in society,—not because he has chosen one profession rather than another,—nor because he has lived in the world sixty years, rather than sixteen : it is binding upon him because he is a rational being. It is binding on *you*, because *you* are such. Neither can any change in your circumstances exempt you from its obligations. It consents to no compromise. It yields nothing to the selfishness or the passions of men. Do not imagine, therefore, that in consequence of forming new connexions, or of meeting new occurrences, the rules of virtue will be either annihilated or altered. Whatever may be the opinion of others, do not readily acknowledge that as innocent, which you have been in the habit of contemplating, as base or vicious.

It will now, be in your power to make more apparent than heretofore, the side, which you take in the great conflict between virtue and vice ;—between regularity and misrule : and you will, I confidently hope, use whatever influence you may acquire, not only to suppress the grosser vices, but to honour and support religious institutions, and to render effectual every ordinance of man, which has for its object to give permanence, ornament, and perfection to the social state. That you may be stimulated to attach yourselves to the side of order, good morals, and

piety, contemplate the nature of vice. "It is," says an author already referred to, "the only real object of censure and blame, and the source of all evils. Other evils, such as diseases, poverty, losses, and calumny, affect only what is external; but they need not disturb our *minds*, or do the least injury to what is truly *ourselves*. But vice pierces, and wounds, and lays waste *ourselves*. It hurts not merely the *body*, the *reputation*, or the *fortune*, but the *man*; and plants *anguish*, *uproar*, and *death* in the soul itself. Other evils may, in the end, prove benefits to us, but this is eternally, and unchangeably evil; the bane of every heart, into which it enters: the ruin of all, who do not in time rescue themselves from its dominion; and the sting and misery in whatever else afflicts us.

"'Tis impossible to conceive what it is to set up our own wills against reason and the divine will,—to violate the order of the world, and depart from that law, which governs all things, and by which the Deity acts. There is no object in nature so monstrous, as a reasonable being defiled with guilt, living in contradiction to the remonstrances of his understanding, trampling on the authority of God, and opposing himself to the obligations of truth and righteousness."

To repress this disorder, to reclaim the guilty

wanderings of men, to reconcil  them to the principles of eternal justice, and to unite in one vast community all virtuous beings, whether of human or angelic nature, is the great object of the christian religion. *It hath pleased the Father, that in Christ all fulness should dwell, and by him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.* Unite your interests to those of this honourable and vast fraternity. Unless you possess the spirit of christianity, that principle of moral life, by which this community is animated, you are, this day, going unshielded into a world, which is unfriendly to virtue. Without the spirit of christianity, you are now embarking on the ocean of life, without a line, or chart, or compass;—an ocean, where you are liable to be allured by Sirens, or agitated by boisterous winds. But, possessing this, you shall pass, in safety the enchanted shores, and survive every storm, cheered and directed by the star of Bethlehem.

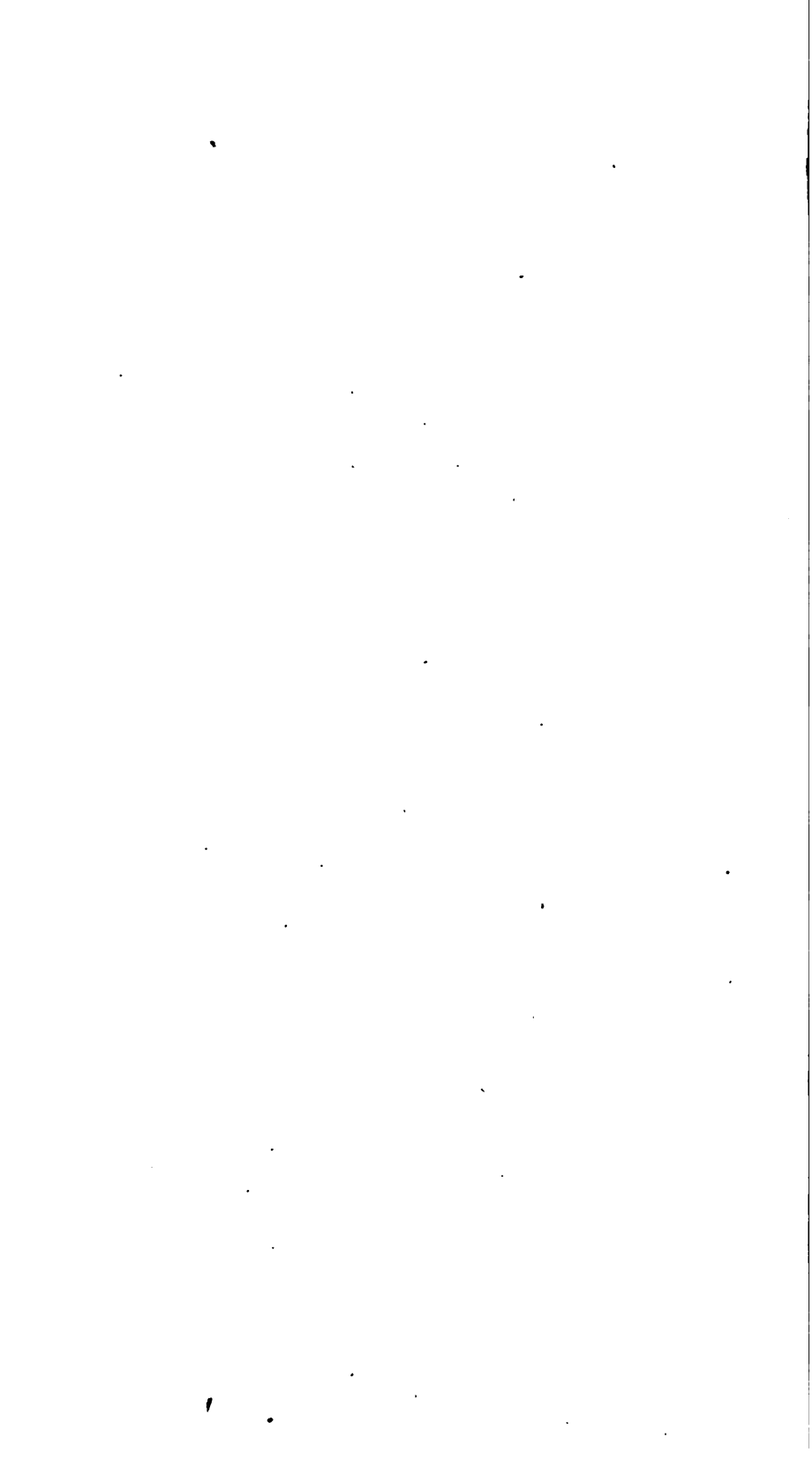
Of the class, which, three years ago, I addressed, on an occasion similar to the present, part of whom participate the honours and exercises of this day, two,\* alas, will return no more. The fresh earth on their graves has now been moistened by the tears of friendship. Nothing remains for me, but to suggest to you that rational and pious use, to which, events

\* George Freeman and William Pilsbury.

of this nature ought to be improved. Let me not be accused of throwing a gloom on the cheerful aspect of this day, by reminding you that you are mortal. This is forced upon your recollection, less by any remarks of mine, than by the Providence of God, and by the anniversary itself. We wish you, indeed, if such be your Creator's good pleasure, many years of joyous prosperity. But even *one* is more than we can promise you; so is a month, when we reflect, that, of those, who immediately preceded you, one\* almost literally descended from this stage to the grave! Whatever claims religion has upon you, they are imperious, and demand to be immediately satisfied.

*"To man's false optics, (from his folly, false,)
 Time, in advance, behind him hides his wings,
 And seems to creep, decrepit with his age;
 Behold him, when pass'd by! What then is seen,
 But his broad pinions, swifter than the winds?
 And all mankind, in contradiction strong,
 Rueful, aghast, cry out on his career."*

\* James Cargil.



# ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1816.

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*Young Gentlemen,*

IN these remarks, which are doubtless the last, in which it will ever be in my power to address you, I should hardly be excused, were my object any other, than your improvement, either moral or intellectual. Human powers are given *first* to be cultivated, and *then* to be used for the great purpose of individual and public happiness. In pursuing the former of these objects, you have already made some advancement; while the latter has scarcely yet been presented to you in its full dimensions. In regard to both, it is important to possess a knowledge of the human mind,—an acquaintance with intellectual philosophy. To operate successfully on



matter, the qualities of matter must be known. For a similar reason, if we are endeavouring to strengthen, polish, and direct the mind, in relation either to ourselves or others, it is necessary to be acquainted with its nature and powers, and with the manner, in which application is to be made to it, in order to effect the change or improvement desired.

No man studies, or adopts a course of intellectual discipline with so much certainty of advantage, as he, who knows most of *mind in general*, and the particular structure of *his own*.

But my object, at present, is not so much to illustrate and enforce this idea, as to show the value of *intellectual philosophy* to persons in public life. By public life, I mean the condition of every man, who has extensive influence on the morals or opinions, the pursuits or happiness, of many around him. This influence, which one person has over the character and situation of others, is chiefly effected through the medium of mind; it is an influence on their partialities, their aversions, their determinations and habits. If, therefore, men would effect much good in society, they must be well acquainted with this medium. So far is it from being true, either that researches of this kind are fitted only for the recluse; or that the philosophy of mind is unconnected with the business and purposes of life.

There is no well informed person, I believe, who is not convinced, that much is done in youth, towards forming a permanent character in subsequent years. The direction, which the mind early receives, may be either auspicious or unfortunate, as it respects future intellectual progress. The impressions communicated, and the associations of ideas, which are formed, will have no less influence either to improve or corrupt the moral character. A knowledge of the human mind is, therefore, of primary importance in all, who guide the literary inquiries of youth, or who superintend their early impressions and moral principles.

As to intellectual progress, there are certain truths, which the mind more readily receives, than others; and, by the aid of which these others are more easily comprehended and retained. A knowledge of the human mind will show what truths belong to each of these classes; and what relations different propositions, and different sciences have to each other. That the order, in which truths are presented to the mind, is of material importance, will appear, if we consider the impossibility of reading sentences, without a previous knowledge of words, syllables, and letters;—or of understanding the higher branches of mathematics, for him, who has not been taught the elements of geometry.

The arrangement of propositions in Euclid, you well know, is not a matter of casualty. Those, which precede, are laid down as the stones of a pavement, on which you commodiously march forward to others, in advance.

The same method of proceeding, is requisite in teaching, not only every branch of natural science, but the principle, of ethics, and the doctrines of christianity. All these are addressed to our reason. They are to be received on evidence. And those propositions, on each of these subjects, ought first to be taught, which will most facilitate the introduction of others.

But further, it is necessary, that truth be so presented, as not only to be readily understood, but in such manner if possible, as to excite no prejudice. Therefore, it ought not to be exhibited in connexion with any thing low, extravagant, and disgusting; nor even, if it may be avoided, with any other truth, against which strong prejudices are known to exist. Agreeably to this, it is asserted by an author, well known to you, to be "one of the most essential objects of education, by watching over the impressions, which the mind receives in early life, to secure it against the influence of prevailing errors; and, as far as possible, to engage its possessions on the side of truth." Now, the ac-

complishment of this object may be expected just in proportion, as the human mind is analyzed, and its different powers, especially its principle of association, distinctly known.

Besides, religion, or what is strictly speaking, denominated moral character, is, by no means, made up of intellectual assent to certain propositions. A man can no more be religious, than he can be amiable, obliging, or compassionate, merely by the force of his understanding. Religion requires, that the will, the affections, and imagination should habitually obey the dictates of this presiding power. A knowledge of these faculties is, therefore, necessary not less for the moral or the religious instructor, than for those, who exerte to literary research, or direct the scientific inquiries of youth.

According to the definition I have given, few descriptions of men can be said to act in a capacity more public, than legislators ;—those, who form the constitution, or the subsequent laws of a state. By these will be affected, in a greater or less degree, the safety, property, and morals of all the individuals in a community. Some forms of government, and some political institutions are better for securing happiness, peace, and virtue, than others. Now, it is obvious, that all forms of government and civil establishments are intended to operate upon mind,—

to influence and control the conduct of intelligent agents. It is necessary, therefore, that they, who frame them, should be acquainted with the principles of mind. In forming civil establishments, a knowledge of intellectual philosophy is the more necessary, as there is a defect in experience. The physiologist, taught by a series of well conducted experiments, may be perfectly confident, what will be the result of certain compositions. But, if his experiments have been heedlessly made:—or if he is doubtful, whether his present ingredients are the same, or mixed in the same proportions, as on former occasions, the result will be wholly uncertain. This kind of uncertainty will attend every experiment, in the result of which *human choice* is implied; and will be increased in proportion to the *number* of minds, on which such result is depending. Now, no two nations were ever found, in character and circumstances perfectly alike. And, therefore, though experience must be of vast importance to the statesman, there is always uncertainty in arguing from the condition of one nation to that of another. Hence a knowledge of intellectual philosophy is necessary to enable him to estimate the difference, as to result, which will be produced by this difference of circumstances.

There are other views of the subject, which

will lead to the same opinion as to the connexion between legislation and a knowledge of the human mind. It is the object of every enlightened statesman to make it the interest of each to pursue that course, which will advance the public interest. Now, as punishment is an evil, designed to counterbalance the supposed advantage of doing wrong, the idea of punishment ought to be intimately connected with that of crime. And the more clearly this connexion is seen, the less frequently will occur, either crimes or punishments.

That civil establishments should be adapted to the nature of man, is necessary alike to their utility and duration. When a government is built on ignorance, prejudice, or the interest of a few, as soon as the people are enlightened, there will be a revolution. But if accommodated to the nature and powers of man, and founded on the broad principles of justice, it will be the more stable, as light increases.

Nearly the same observations will apply to all benevolent and moral institutions. As these are intended to operate upon mind, they must have their foundation in a knowledge of its principles.

Besides, to the character of an able statesman, it is obvious, that the power both of speaking and writing is necessary. This power implies not only

the possession of a cultivated mind, but knowledge of mind in general.

The same knowledge is requisite to a right estimate of evidence, whether exhibited before deliberative assemblies, or used in judiciary trials; whether relating to historical facts, or the common intercourse of life.

In fine, the *possession* of intellects is that, by which men are chiefly distinguished from brute animals; and to the *cultivation* of these powers we owe the whole difference between the savage and the civil state. From mind originates advancement in knowledge, improvement in arts, the blessings of government, and all national changes, whether for the better or worse. It is, indeed, the vast machine, by which the greatest events of the universe are brought into existence. If so, it ought to be well understood, that its powers may receive a suitable direction.

Nor should it be forgotten, that for prosecuting studies of this kind, all men have peculiar facilities. To acquire knowledge in various branches of natural science, expensive preparations are requisite. They can be pursued only at particular places, or at certain seasons. For the study of mind, you need not, like the astronomer, erect an observatory; nor, with the chemist, repair to the furnace, or provide re-

torts, and tests, and solvents; nor with the botanist, need you collect the vegetation of every climate. The whole apparatus and subject of examination are contained within yourselves. The process is for ever going on. Wherever there is thought and volition, there is interesting matter for intellectual research.

You may ask in this place, whether, by becoming well versed in the philosophy of mind, a person does not acquire a dangerous power;—and whether, if Fenelon, Pascal, Bacon, Locke, Addison and Burke employed their powers, whether of reasoning or eloquence, with intention to enlighten and amend their species, others may not, through the same medium, assail the morals, and corrupt the heart.—Unquestionably they may. And so may strength and soundness of body be employed for purposes of violence and terror. Still neither impotence nor diseases are objects of desire.

An enlarged acquaintance with human powers, or even the possession of them, is dangerous, when directed by no moral principle. Without this, it were better to be any thing, than a rational being. Your intellectual powers, let me remind you, will survive the most durable objects of the material universe. They will not, like these, wax old, or be impaired by time; nay, the revolutions of eternity will but add to their vigour and comprehension.



There will be a clearness of perception, corresponding with their enlargement. Your relation to God, the nature of human obligation, and the difference between virtue and vice, will be subjects neither of investigation nor cavil. The friends of virtue will then experience that peace and overflowing joy, which arise from an intimate and near view of its obligation and good desert, and of the unchangeable approbation of its author. The conflict, on the other side, which is now maintained in vicious men, between reason and inclination, will then become intolerable; when reason shall have acquired immortal strength, and vice unchangeable dominion.

There are two courses, young gentlemen, both as it respects intellectual and moral attainments, now presented to your choice; and in regard to which, I pray God, you may feel no hesitation.

*As to the powers of intellect*, by neglecting them, or by engaging in pursuits, in which they have little exercise, you may, and that, perhaps, with more rapidity, than you imagine, erase from the memory, whatever valuable impression it has received, during that course of education, which is now at a close.— You may, on the other hand, consider your present acquirements, only as an encouraging commencement of a studious life. “I have always believed,” says the author of letters attributed to Ganganelli, “that the honour of possessing an immortal soul, was the

"greatest possible glory." If you view the matter in the same light, and consider mind, as an invaluable deposit, for the preservation and use of which you are accountable ;—if, with systematical assiduity you make it more rich, and solid, and brilliant, at the end of every year, than it was at the beginning ;—if you form an increasing attachment to books and to literary men, the time may arrive, and certainly will arrive, if life be prolonged, when you will look back on your present acquisitions, as you now reflect on the first elements of education.

*As to moral attainments*, the two courses are equally different. I consider, that this day, there is formed a crisis in your life and character. From this time you may pervert every acquirement and every talent, using both to propagate error, and to bear down truth, order, and correct manners. Or, on the contrary, you may now resolve to use whatever powers you have, or whatever influence you may acquire, to discountenance ignorant delusion, false principles, profligate habits, and impiety, and to promote good learning, whatever tends to the stability and improvement of society, or to secure the immortal interests of man. But, on the present occasion, let me urge you to look, not exclusively either to respectability of character, or services, which society may claim from you. If mind is im-

perishable, you have a personal interest at stake, of greater value, than the limited happiness of communities or nations. Christianity opens to you a boundless prospect. It coincides with enlightened, unbiassed reason, both as to its commands and prohibitions. In this religion, you will find a friend most constant and powerful, or an enemy, bold, active, and unrelenting. It neither professes, nor tolerates neutrality. It now offers you its clear light and its rich consolations. May your improvement of the one, ensure to you the unlimited possession of the other.

## ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1817.

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*Young Gentlemen,*

SHOULD the present address contain little more, than remarks, which have been frequently made to you, during the time of your connexion with college, I may still, perhaps, be permitted to hope, that the occasion will impart to them a peculiar interest. Instead of giving you a system of rules and counsels, which, did the time permit, might seem not unsuitable to the present crisis, I shall limit myself to a very few particulars, relative to intellectual improvement, social intercourse, and your duties as citizens and Christians.

Without denying what the analogy of nature abundantly suggests; viz. that powers of mind are

unequally bestowed on men, it is important to observe, that the principal difference in the success of those, who engage in pursuit of knowledge, may be traced to that diversity, in which they possess the powers of *attention* and *perseverance*.

Men of ordinary minds, when their attention is strongly attracted to a particular object, are known to acquire knowledge with a rapidity, of which they were previously thought incapable. If a man is called to defend a favourite opinion in theology, morality, or politics, he frequently displays unexpected acumen, address, and dexterity. The reason is obvious. His feelings are roused. Far from finding it laborious to fix his thoughts on the subject, he perceives, that they fly to it, as if by enchantment. Its shape, so to speak, its constituent parts, its various relations are all minutely discerned. Let the mind be as securely fastened to any other subject, and similar will be the result. An accurate knowledge of it will be rapidly acquired. Nor is such a command of our thoughts less necessary to the *retaining*, than to the *acquisition* of knowledge.

That the power of attention is not exclusively the gift of nature, appears by the case now supposed. In this instance it is the result of casualty. But a power, so important, must not be submitted to the caprices of such a guide. To every person, who is

either cultivating his mind, or using it for the advantage of others, it becomes a great desideratum to have his thoughts at his own command; that is, subject to his own choice and direction.

If a young man at the time of leaving the place of his education, has acquired not only a thirst for knowledge, but a good command of his attention,—an ability to fix his thoughts on whatever subject it becomes his duty to investigate;—this one acquisition is perhaps of greater value, than all the ideas, which have been communicated to him on subjects of literature and science. For, he, who possesses the former, will not long remain destitute of the latter; being prepared to engage, with entire confidence of success, in any literary or scientific pursuit.

On the contrary, when a person has formed habits of inattention;—when his thoughts cease to be under the control of his will, and his chief labour is, not to investigate the subject in hand, but to keep his thoughts from deserting it,—not to charge home on the enemy, but to prevent his recreant troops from flying,—no success can be anticipated,—no victories can be won.

Whenever the power of commanding the mind is thus lost, the train of its ideas lies at the mercy

of casual circumstances; and even the active part of life differs in nothing from a waking dream. This state of mental disorder,—this intellectual desolation is a present judgment of Almighty God, on such as neglect or abuse those rational powers, which he has graciously bestowed.—I am perfectly convinced, young gentlemen, that this language is scarcely sufficient to represent the detriment, which you must experience, should you, by the ill management of your minds, suffer them to escape from your control.

Should it be asked, how this power of attention is to be acquired, I answer, that some portion of it belongs to the human constitution. Every person, who begins a course of study, is able, in a greater or less degree, to regulate his own thoughts. The power is, therefore, not to be *created*, but to be strengthened and cherished. And this is to be done by use, and exercise. All powers, whether of body or mind, are, in this way, brought to their highest state of improvement. The studies, which most exercise the powers of attention, are, doubtless, peculiarly calculated to invigorate those powers. *Mathematics* and *metaphysics* have, in this view, distinguished claims. Progress in either of these sciences so obviously depends on attention, that ignorance

of them is known to be the doom of every student, who will not be at pains to confine his thoughts.

But though these studies are well calculated to procure for young men the command of their thoughts, they are not indispensable to that end. *Any* study, *any* occupation, or labour, which serves to fix the thoughts, serves to increase the power of commanding them.

The study of language, is, in this respect, entitled to distinct notice. When it is considered, that words are signs of things invisible, that is, of ideas;—that, of the vast variety of emotions and thoughts, which occur in the human mind, the greater part may be so expressed by words as to become intelligible to others:—when it is further considered, that a comparison of different languages serves to prove, that, in different ages, and distant nations, similar divisions and classifications have been made in the objects of human thought; and that a resemblance has been imagined between corporeal and mental operations, insomuch, that the language of matter has become, in many instances, the language of mind;—when it is further observed, that not only the progress of mind, but the form of civil government, the state of the arts and civilization, in any country or period, may be ascertained with considerable accuracy, by



the structure, poverty, or copiousness of its language :—when all this is perceived, it will not seem easy to overrate the science of philology, or to think too highly of its influence in disciplining the mental powers.

Next to *attention*, I would recommend persevering *industry*.

It will be pardoned, perhaps, if I suggest a doubt, whether the highest degree of application, of which the mind is capable, without endangering health, has ever been ascertained by experiment, even at our best public seminaries. I am led to entertain this doubt, by reflecting on the intense study, to which many divines and scholars have submitted through the greater part of a long life ; and from being, on the best authority, informed, that there is now practised in some of the Universities on the European continent, a degree of industry, which to us seems almost incredible.

It cannot easily be imagined, that there is any thing in the climate of America, more than in that of England or Germany, which renders study unfavourable to health or longevity.

Should I be told of instances, in which, not only health, but life, has been prematurely sacrificed by studious men ; I answer, that these instances, allow-

ing the largest calculation, are exceedingly few. And, of these few, it is believed, that a very small proportion are the necessary effect of study. The rest are produced by the want of that attention to exercise and regimen, which is perfectly consistent with habits of assiduous application.

Instead of reiterating those exhortations to industry, which may have become familiar to you, I will take the liberty of using the words of Lord Minto, in which, a few years since, he addressed a class at Fort William College, that, like you, were leaving the place of their education. "Ply your labours, and distrust every other means of success. Above all, beware of a treacherous confidence in the advantage of a supposed superiority of talents. These, unsupported by industry will drop you midway; or perhaps you will not have started, when the diligent traveller will have won the race. Be assured, that, in study, *application* is the first, the second, and the third virtue; application, not *per saltum*, not in capricious fits, not with ebbs and flows of indolence and exertion. Ardent indeed it must be; but uniform and unabating. Those among the Grecian youth, who aspired at Olympic crowns, would, by no means, trust their hopes to the flattering gifts of nature, however lavishly endowed; but sought to

fix their fortune, and secure their laurels, by long and vigorous preparations for the contest."

It is not to be imagined, however, that industry is valuable only in relation to literary and scientific pursuits. Though I hope, you will always be students, you are not to be students *exclusively*. Active duties there are, which, on your peril, you must not neglect. In reference to these, as well as others, assiduity is indispensable. *Whatever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.*

That attention and perseverance, of which I have been speaking, will doubtless produce the most favourable effects, on your *powers of judging*, and on your decisions. By cultivating the judgment, and deciding deliberately, you obtain two important advantages. Decisions, thus formed, will usually be found correct; they will, therefore, be respected, both by others and yourselves. In point of judgment, men are very likely to be estimated according to real value. *His* opinions, who is usually found to be in the right, will *seldom* be disregarded. He will, therefore, have a degree of influence in society, to which a person of feeble judgment, or hasty decisions, can have no claim. In addition to this, he will himself have good confidence in those intellectual results, to which he arrives. No person should, indeed, reject good counsel, nor treat contemptuously

the opinions of other men. But he, who cannot, in the event, be safely guided by his own judgment, will be in perpetual apprehension and doubt. He will always be in danger from the weakness or dishonesty of men. He ought, therefore, to contract the sphere of his action, and thus diminish his responsibility.

Never aspire at places or employments, disproportionate to your powers. Let it be rather your ambition to discharge, with ability, promptness, and fidelity, the duties of that station in which you are. This, of itself, will enable others to judge, whether a more elevated office might, with safety and advantage, be placed in your hands. Be assured, that a restless desire of elevation and aggrandizement, is as little consistent with happiness, as it is with duty.

As to fair reputation, it is, for various reasons to be carefully cherished. No person of correct feelings ever was, or ever can be indifferent to it. In itself desirable, it is that, without which, no considerable good can be effected, either for your friends or the public. High character for talents is not, indeed, within the reach of all men. But what is far better, I mean reputation for moral virtue, may alike be obtained by men of superior and ordinary powers. This *honest report* is that *good name*,

which Solomon declares to be better than precious ointment. But though you should assiduously cherish a fair character, be not greatly alarmed at malevolent slander. Reputation for correct morals, if fairly gained and well supported, cannot, in a moment, be withered. There is a hardness and vigour attached to it. If it bends, for a short time, before the blast, it will soon resume its former erect attitude, insensibly extending both its roots and its branches.

Let your manners be of such a kind, as to conciliate esteem. A person is never innocent in giving offence, when, without any sacrifice of duty, truth, or propriety, it might have been avoided. Conscious, that an action is good, persons are sometimes regardless of the manner of performing it, and as to the impression, which it is likely to make on the minds of others. As if it were possible for a man to be sincerely desirous of doing good, and at the same moment indifferent, whether good or evil should result from his actions!

The urbanity and caution, now mentioned, are perfectly consistent with decision of character. Were it otherwise, they could never be matter of commendation. For who would not prefer the oak with all its roughness, to the willow, from which nothing can safely depend.

If, in your intercourse with men, you receive injurious treatment, prudence, as well as the principles of christianity, requires, that you neither overrate the injury, nor return it with severity. While you are viewed as a sufferer, others will take an interest in your favour. But, if you take ample revenge, exaggerate, or blazon the offence, which you have received, the public will feel little compassion, but will suffer yourself and your adversary to settle the affair at your leisure.

Whatever profession you may respectively pursue, you will not cease to be members of the state. As such you are bound to feel for the public prosperity, and to cherish an ardent affection for that free constitution, under which we have the happiness to live. The difference between a free and an absolute government, does not consist in this, that there is more restraint in the one, than in the other; but in this rather, that, in the latter case, restraint is created by fear and physical force,—in the former, by reason and enlightened morality. In proportion, therefore, as you aid the interests of sound learning, virtue, and piety, you strengthen the only foundation, on which a republic can be supported.

But, young gentlemen, you are not only members of civil society, but of a christian nation. Something, therefore, you well know, is at hazard, more

valuable than your own temporal interest, or even than that of the community. Whether you are sedate or volatile, pious or profane, one fact is well established,—a revelation has been made from the immutable GOD; a revelation, which, under the sanction of eternal consequences, requires every man to be a Christian, and every Christian more nearly to resemble his master: *Because God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man, whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.* This revelation, with all its features, whether of mildness or severity, I do most affectionately entreat you to receive, revere, and obey; in the full persuasion, that he was divinely inspired, who said, *I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord.*

Among the fascinating scenes of this day, it has not, I hope, escaped your recollection, that one\* of those, who took part in the exercises of the last commencement, survived that occasion but a few months. The fatal disorder, it now appears, had, at that time, without exciting alarm, commenced the attack, which ended in victory. A conquest of the same kind must, when God pleases, be obtained

\* Dudley Norris.

over us. Remember, that nothing in life is so interesting, or certain, as the close of it. Let your anticipations and purposes be of great extent and comprehension. Let them reach to all the successions of eternity: let them embrace all that is glorious in the christian salvation.





## ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1818.

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*Young Gentlemen,*

As power and obligation are correlative terms, to know the measure of our duty, it is requisite to examine our abilities, and the extent, to which they may be brought into beneficent action. Our obligations are commensurate, not merely with our powers, (whether physical or intellectual;) but with these in connexion with opportunities of exerting them for the promotion of virtue and human enjoyment.

It will not, therefore, be foreign to the present occasion, to contemplate the influence, which persons, liberally educated, have in society; and the

importance, which is by consequence attached to their characters.

A large portion of those, who receive a collegial education, enter on what are denominated the learned professions. To estimate their importance in society, it is, therefore, necessary to consider the nature and influence of these professions, together with the proportion and standing of those, who, in each of them, were previously instructed in some of our public seminaries.

I well know, that there are those, to whom a college catalogue gives their only distinction. There are others too, and those in no inconsiderable number, who, by a vigour of intellects, which no circumstances can repress, and an ardour of application, which no difficulties can discourage, make ample amends for the want of literary advantages in early life, and justly claim the notice, confidence, and gratitude of the public.

This obvious fact notwithstanding, it is still true, that the influence, exerted in the community, by those, whose intellectual habits were first formed in our public institutions, has an intimate connexion with individual happiness and national character.

We begin with counsellors at law.—In the large number of those, who, from the first settlement of New England, have arrived at eminence in this pro-

fession, imagine the non-existence of all, whose youth was consecrated to literature, and who were prepared by public education for professional studies; there will, doubtless, still remain characters of much distinction and great merit.

But, who does not perceive the chasm of hideous extent, implied in the supposition, which has now been made?

In all the momentous discussions concerning the principles of government, and the establishment of civil constitutions, which the state of political science, and the condition of our infant country, have rendered numerous;—in questions, relative to the greatest degree of freedom, compatible with established authority; or the least individual restraint, that is consistent with public security;—in legislative assemblies, where boundaries, provisions, and exceptions, are necessarily attached to every act of legislation;—but especially, in expounding the law, and administering public justice; in maintaining the dignity of civil tribunals, and securing confidence to their decisions:—in all these respects, how extensive and salutary has been the influence of the law profession, and of that species of law characters, to which we allude!

But these subjects, you perceive, comprehend all, that is implied in the civil state. They relate

to life, property, and morals ; to every thing, indeed, for which man consents to relinquish the freedom of nature. There is no family, however obscure,—there is no member of the community, whose happiness and safety are not dependant on the constitution, under which he lives,—the statutes, that are enacted, and the impartiality and promptness, with which justice is administered.

Our dependance on the *medical profession*, is too obvious and too sensibly felt, to require proof. While frailty, disease, and death, remain, the assiduous and well informed physician can never cease to occupy a conspicuous place in public estimation. The proportion of those, who have not accomplished the prescribed course of college studies, is, perhaps, somewhat greater in this profession, than in either of the other two.

But, if the number of physicians publicly educated were small, such has not been their influence in the medical fraternity :—such has not been their usefulness to the public. They have been among the first to project and organize medical establishments ;—to check empiricism and unprincipled temerity ;—to encourage laborious study ;—to bring into repute that candid, open, and philosophical practice ; and that readiness to admit into the healing art the happy discoveries of modern

science; which have raised the medical profession to its present high degree of respectability.

Reckoning from the earliest periods in our history, the preachers of religion have, with few exceptions, been educated at public institutions. This has resulted from the learning, judgment, and piety, for which so many among the venerated fathers of New England, whether of the clergy or laity, rendered themselves distinguished. The establishment of Harvard College, at so early a period; when the country in general was a vast wilderness; when wealth was almost unknown; when dangers were forever impending; and the tenure of life peculiarly frail; evinces a generosity of spirit, intellectual comprehension, enlargement of views, and boldness of design, which their descendants should never contemplate, without gratitude and admiration. Their object was to have a state, free, virtuous, enlightened, and well governed;—a church, exemplary and evangelical;—a ministry, learned, pious, and venerable.

For many reasons, the influence of a christian teacher depends much, under God, on the soundness of his mind and the solidity of his knowledge. It will readily be perceived, that he cannot, without great disadvantage, be unacquainted with subjects intimately connected with his profession. But

the subjects, connected with the clerical profession, are numerous and of great extent.

The duty of man, it has been already observed, is commensurate with his powers. These powers should, therefore, be well understood by those, who would urge him to duty, by displaying his obligations.

The divine law is to be vindicated; and offenders are to be shown, that the virtue, which their Creator demands, is precisely that, which corresponds with their rational nature, and is what enlightened reason condemns them for not possessing.

As christian teachers are set for the defence of the gospel, it is required of them clearly and forcibly to exhibit the evidences of christianity; to remove objections, which may be urged against it, and to defend not only its precepts, but its principles and declarations. Whether we consider the antiquity of the sacred scriptures,—the time, at which they were written,—the customs long disused, to which they refer,—the period, which elapsed from the age of Moses to that of Christ,—and the numerous changes, which the world underwent during that period:—whether we consider the peculiarities of the nation, from which they originated, and whose fortunes they describe,—their style and manner, influenced by a thousand circumstances,

which no longer exist;—or whether we consider, that the languages, in which they were written, have, for many ages, fallen into disuse;—we might rationally conclude, that something more than an ordinary education would be requisite, rightly to understand and judiciously to apply them.

But it will be more directly to our purpose, to fix our attention, for a moment, on the influence, which well informed teachers of religion have had on the literary and moral state of the community. They have been the hearty and uniform friends of learning, and of all institutions, which have, for their object, either the enlargement of the mind, or the melioration of moral habits. They have been extensively active in the encouragement of common schools, by which some portion of knowledge has been conveyed into every family, whether enjoying wealth, or suffering poverty. They have never viewed, but with honest attachment, and warm interest, the establishment of seminaries of a more public nature, and designed to cherish a mental discipline, more liberal and comprehensive.

By displaying the sanctions of religion, and enforcing its duties, they have brought God and a retribution to remembrance;—kept alive, and rendered active the moral sense; imposed restraints



on human passions; and thus contributed to the interests of virtue and public order.

In no country on earth, is the action of that vast machine, called civil society, maintained without enormous waste of moral principle. Integrity, truth, benevolence, and justice, are worn away by the revolutions, which are kept up, through its various parts. In what manner, do you imagine, that this waste is to be repaired? Whence is that stock of virtue to be supplied, which is absolutely necessary to a prosperous state either of civil government or social intercourse? It is from the precepts, the discoveries, and sanctions of religion. It is from christian instruction, early and incessantly applied to the public mind; by which conscience is rendered more alive, more active, and more imperious. This, even though the statesman be ignorant of it, is the celestial dew, that nourishes the vine and fig-tree, by which he is shaded. He, who brings home, to the bosoms of those around him, a livelier belief in religion, a more sensible conviction of the unchangeable difference between virtue and vice, together with their appropriate consequences, is a benefactor to the government, under which he lives, to every corporation, to every profession, and to every member of the state. Had piety formed no part of the character of our ancestors;—had there

been no religious instructors, or, (what is worse,) had such instructors been hostile to knowledge, and generally indifferent to the duties of their profession, I ask, whether our nation would have been what it now is? Whether there would have been the same stability in government, or the same security to the people; and whether, in that case, there would have been wanting the strongest ties, by which society can be bound together.

Now, by bringing into one view the three learned professions, together with the proportion and standing of those, who, in each of them, were previously nurtured in some of our collegial institutions, it will be easy to estimate, in general, the influence, which gentlemen publicly educated, have in society, and the importance, which is consequently attached to their characters.

Should you find, in this representation, any thing to excite your vanity, it will, I hope, be effectually allayed by a rational view of your dangers and obligations. As you are now coming forward to take some part in life, and to produce some degree of effect on the condition and character of men, the sphere of duty will be enlarged, and your defects, and errors, and vices, will be rendered the more public, and the more reprehensible.

From the remarks, which have been made, as

to the effects, which colleges have on public manners and public happiness, you cannot doubt, that every enlightened friend to his country, is a friend to them. But on you, in common with all, who, in youth, have enjoyed similar advantages, they have peculiar claims. It would be no unsuitable way of satisfying these claims, should you manifest a settled and uniform attachment to literature, and habitual industry in the pursuit of it. It will follow, of course, that, by conversation and effort, so far as your influence may extend, you give aid to all well directed endeavours to improve science, diffuse a literary taste, and to render our systems of public instruction more comprehensive and more perfect. But, especially, let your deportment be such, as to do honour to the collegiate character. Make it evident, that you have not obtained knowledge at the expense of correct principles and sober habits; and thus allay the fears of virtuous parents, lest the atmosphere of a public seminary should communicate to their sons a moral contagion.

I have said, that your character as scholars, requires you to cultivate and encourage a correct literary taste. There may be a more intimate connexion between this, and your influence on the morals and piety of those around you, than is, at first, apprehended. Every effort to promote reli-

gion, as well as all other purposes of benevolence, receives material detriment, when connected with what is gross, absurd, or extravagant. The style and manner, in which these purposes are proposed and urged, are, by no means, immaterial to their success. As the present is an era of great events, it is likewise an era of strong feelings. These naturally impel to corresponding expressions. Hence may arise a style, wild and inflated; a manner of speaking and writing, which must ever be offensive to a correct scholar, and to every man of nice discernment. Hence, too, may arise a morbid sensibility, that is never satisfied with the modesty, purity, and simplicity of nature.

The great design of every person on earth should be to do good. This is the object of God himself; and it is this, which renders his character lovely in the estimation of good beings. But, as he always pursues this end, in a way of righteousness and wisdom, he requires us to be no less conscientious in the means used, than in the purpose to be accomplished. That good, which cannot be attained, without the violation of justice or charity, however it may, through the vapours, which surround our intellectual vision, swell upon the sight, is not to be the object either of effort or desire. God does not require us to commit crimes, in order

to facilitate the operations of his providence. That the ark might be preserved from falling, it was not necessary, that Uzziah should commit sacrilege.

The field of legitimate benevolence was never more extensive, nor more inviting, than it is at present. Never was there a period, which afforded a fairer opportunity for exerting a beneficent influence. In that comprehensive system of charitable effort, by which the present day is so honourably distinguished; there is some place, in which every person may operate to advantage, some spring, which he may set at liberty,—some wheel, which he may put in motion. If he cannot endow a hospital, or institute a professorship; he may, at least, instruct some child, ignorant, vicious, and forlorn, in the first rudiments of knowledge, and the first principles of duty.

When I consider the harmony, which prevails, and gains strength in our own beloved country,—the pacific aspect of Europe, and that impulse of munificence, compassion, and piety, which seems to have been simultaneously felt in every part of christendom, and the essential tendency, which a knowledge of the scriptures has to establish *peace on earth and good will towards men*; it is impossible not to cherish a confident hope, that a change for the better is soon to be effected, in the character and

condition of man. To a mind, that is gladdened by these prospects, the sun seems to shine with a more benignant and uniform radiance,—the clouds seem skirted with colours of uncommon richness and beauty,—a deeper green rests on the face of nature; and all the powers of life are exhilarated, as its blessings are multiplied. *Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree. The mountains and hills shall break forth into singing: and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*

But, whether our anticipations are too sanguine or not, your duties, young gentlemen, are not doubtful. According to the sphere, in which you are placed, and the abilities bestowed on you, you are debtors to every man, whose knowledge, moral feelings, or happiness, may be influenced by your endeavours. These obligations you will feel with peculiar sensibility, if conscious, that, during your collegiate life, you have received impressions, more valuable than those, which are made on the intellects, and have enjoyed consolations, more rich than those, imparted even by the acquisition of knowledge.

But let your expectations of enjoyment, and your purposes of usefulness, be formed with distinct reference to human frailty. Reminded, as I have

been, that the loveliest flowers may blossom, but for the grave;\* admonished, as you are, by the gradual decays of a fellow pupil,† whom disease prevents from participating the exercises of this day, we should both be criminal, did we forget, that every earthly hope may be blasted, and every human purpose may be rendered vain, by the uncontrollable decrees of infinite, but unsearchable wisdom,

Young Gentlemen,—I can add nothing, but to assure you, that, in departing from this seminary, you carry with you, in no ordinary degree, our confidence and our affection.

\* The President's youngest son, an interesting child aged two years, died Oct. 19, 1817.

† Isaac P. Anderson here alluded to, died Dec. 16, 1818.

## INTRODUCTORY

# LECTURE.

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THE DANGERS OF A COLLEGE LIFE, AND ITS SECURITY.

I AM not solicitous, that the present should be termed a *theological lecture*. It will have for its immediate object no individual doctrine of christianity ; but that general regularity of life, which, as students in science and literature, and believers in revealed religion, you are bound to maintain.

I shall, *first*, enumerate some of the dangers of a collegial life : *secondly*, consider, in what way you may obtain the greatest security in the midst of them.

Under the *first* division I observe, that one of



the dangers, to which literary youth are exposed, arises from the opinion, that the standard of morals is not, to all persons, the same, and that, in regard to the students of a college, the laws of revealed religion are either repealed, or rendered more lenient. That such a sentiment, if not avowed, is secretly entertained, appears from this circumstance, that practices, which, in other situations, are universally condemned, as immoral, are sometimes viewed by associated literary young men, with little, or no displeasure.

If such a sentiment is cherished by any, I fear indeed, that the error is invincible. That want of thought, which gave rise to it, will probably render ineffectual any efforts of mine for its removal. It is doubtless true, that the *external* duties of a statesman are different from those of the soldier;—that the external duties of the physician are different from those of the artificer: that is, the same moral principle, piety to God, and benevolence to man, would require different actions of persons, whose conditions in life, were so various; because the virtue and happiness of the great mass may be most effectually advanced by sedulous attention to their respective employments. But persons in neither of the situations mentioned, can be at liberty to lose sight of these great objects. The artificer is as really bound

to relieve a neighbour in distress, as the physician to administer cordials. And if the soldier has no right to turn his arms against the state, neither has the politician to concert plans for its ruin. The obligations of veracity, justice, and temperance, are on all equally binding. The statesman and the soldier are not less the creatures of God, than the artist or the cottager. They have the same origin, and the same relation to their Creator. The same dispositions towards the Deity and his creatures are required of both. If the soul of one man is immortal, the soul of another is not less so. If there be a retribution, which reason renders probable, and revelation makes certain, it must, in relation to all men, proceed on the same principles.

These remarks, which relate to persons in different employments, are equally applicable to those, in various stages of life. Whenever we acquire such intellectual powers, as render us accountable, the obligations of morality can neither be violated nor neglected with impunity. If our opportunities for mental cultivation be somewhat more favourable, than those of others, our relations and consequent duties may be better known, and all immorality is the more irrational, criminal, and dangerous. There is the same standard of morality to the rustic youth, inured to manual labour, and to the

young gentleman, whose better fortune is opening to him the treasures of science and literature; with this difference, that the obligations of morality are more easily, and more accurately known, in one case, than in the other.

It may be added, that collegial pursuits give no assurance of long life : so that, if it be, in general, a matter of prudence, to look beyond the narrow limits of our earthly existence, and to consider the eternal consequences of virtue and vice, such anticipations imperiously demand a place among those varied employments, which occupy your time. While you have the honour to be ranked with the intelligent and immortal part of the universe, and while you recollect, that no revolutions of years or ages will be able to extinguish that intellectual spark, which the Creator has placed within you, do not forget, that this spark will soon kindle into the clear and resplendent glow of the seraph, or into those flames of hatred, and malice, and rage, that will eternally torment the reprobate.

Another danger, to which students in a public seminary are exposed, arises from the want of firmness, independence, and a sense of individual responsibility. By firmness, I do not mean a pertinacious adherence to opinions hastily formed :—by independence, I do not mean a disregard to reason,

just laws, and sober maxims. All this, instead of indicating an independent mind, gives evidence of abject servility. The laws of fitness and reason are obeyed by the most excellent, the most powerful, and the most happy beings in the universe. Not only the best and wisest men, and superior created intelligences, but God himself acts under their influence. He never adopts a measure merely because he has power to effect it, but solely because his wisdom and goodness require its adoption. All, which renders the character of God lovely, consists in his uniformly and perpetually regarding the laws of benevolence and reason. This is the noblest, the most exalted, and most perfect character, of which we can form any conception; and is therefore attributed to the Supreme Being. On the contrary, intellectual nature can never appear in deeper degradation, than when those, who possess it, are slaves to inclination,—perpetually obedient to the blind impulse of passion.

That want of independence, of which I speak, and which I conceive, is, by no means, uncommon in public seminaries, is displayed in too great a regard to the practices and opinions of others, when one's own judgment and convictions are on the other side. This is, in fact, for an individual to annihilate himself, as a distinct being, and to attach himself, as a

kind of excrecence, to the general mass. It would be easy to show, that such compliance is morally wrong,—that it is dangerous, and impolitic.

That must, under all circumstances, be morally wrong, which is inconsistent with our own convictions of duty. If I perform an action, convinced, that it is wrong, I intend to do a wrong action. And though it should afterwards be shown, that the action was, in itself, right, and though it might have been innocently performed by another, my intention makes it wrong in me, and, of course, brings guilt upon the conscience. How much more, if the action be obviously and decidedly inconsistent with that sobriety and virtue, which our Creator demands.

Such a compliance is not only wrong in a moral view, but is peculiarly dangerous. The public interest is in a most precarious and threatening state, when there are not, among those, who are best informed, men of stable, unyielding principle, men, who will stand erect, whether the pressure of public opinion bear light or heavy. But characters of this compact, unyielding texture are not formed in a moment. They are the result of principle, confirmed by habit. These habits must commence at an early period. If persons, at the age of fifteen or twenty, allow themselves to proceed, subservient to the dictates of others, in opposition to their own conviction of

right and duty, they will probably have the same compliant morality at the age of twenty five or thirty. If a youth is ready to sacrifice conscience to the habits of that little community, which exists in a college, what should prevent him from making the same sacrifice, when he mixes with the world, and engages in employments of more import to the public?

Further, this yielding temper, of which I speak, is not only dangerous, as it contributes to a habit of acting without principle; it is likewise impolitic. This want of independence is, in truth, the want of integrity. It is possible, indeed, for a man to be greatly dependant on others for his *opinions*, through diffidence of his own judgment. This is hardly what we should expect from persons of strong intellects; but it may be perfectly consistent with innocence and probity. But the want of independence now under consideration, is a readiness to act in compliance with custom, contrary to the conviction of one's own mind. The want of probity, implied in such compliance, is perceived, even by them, to whose habits and wishes the sacrifice is made. They may praise you; but be assured, they will never esteem you for such complaisance. Whereas the person, who has decision of character, and boldly refuses what his conscience condemns, is sure

of the secret veneration of those, who are too unprincipled to imitate his virtue.

As another reason, why this subserviency to the habits of others is impolitic, I mention its tendency to present uneasiness. Few things are more inconsistent with self enjoyment, than suspense and irresolution. From this state of mind, every person, whether old or young, who acts upon principle, is set free, as soon as he discovers, what integrity and virtue demand. But persons of a different description have, within themselves, no criterion of action. They are, by consequence, in suspense, until they can learn the wishes and practice of others. This is, in many cases, no easy matter. And should the majority settle down on a side, opposite their own; or in other words, should they themselves form a determination too soon, the ground at first taken, must be relinquished, and that too under the semblance of conviction. For, whatever be the fact, few persons have hardiness to acknowledge, that they have no principle, but that, exemplifying what perhaps is only fabled of the camelion, they assume the colour of the last object, with which they come in contact.

I would, by no means, be understood to encourage a deportment, morose or repulsive. When compliance with the desires or habits of others certain-

ly involves neither immorality nor indecorum, civility requires it. And, though your refusal to do that, which conscience condemns, should be intelligible and decisive, it need not be angry or opprobrious. The *suaviter in modo* is, by no means, inconsistent with the *fortiter in re*. Let each person consider himself as *individually* accountable to his Maker, and, with unvarying resolution, tempered with mildness, follow that course, which such a relation demands.

The use of profane language is an evil, spreading so widely, as to justify the apprehension, that our literary institutions are not exempt from it. There are two points of view, in which this practice, may be considered;—*first*, that of indecorum; *secondly*, that of impiety. As to indecorum, though this vice is occasionally discovered in the unprincipled of every rank in society, to ascertain where it most prevails, is no difficult matter. Associate with the lowest forms of human nature,—with those, who have either none, or a precarious occupation,—with those, who, on account of indolence, instability, or vice, can appropriate no place, as their home or country,—and, with the language of vulgarity and wretchedness, you are sure to witness a strong mixture of profanity. If you then resort to the work-shop of the industrious artificer,



the dwelling of the reputable yeoman, the counting house of the well informed merchant, or to the abodes of professional eminence, with a different kind of people, you anticipate a different dialect. It occasions surprise, if, among such people, your ears are assailed with the language of the dock, the camp, or the ale-house.

But the indecorum of profaneness is but a feeble reason against it, if compared with that, which arises from its impiety. If religion is not a baseless fabric,—if there is any solidity in its first principles,—if there is a supreme intelligent Being, and a future state, the practice, of which I am speaking, must, in a very high degree, be impious and daring. Those, who indulge themselves in it, (if indulgence it may be called,) render common and ineffectual the most solemn and august ideas, that ever have entered, or ever can enter the human mind. Such are ideas of God and of future reward and punishment. It is strictly and philosophically true, you well know, that God fills not only Heaven and earth, but is excluded from no portion of unlimited space;—that every orb and every system is regulated by his power;—that universal annihilation would result from the momentary withdrawal of his sustaining energy;—and that he has a perfect, intuitive knowledge of all the parts, contained in ev-

ery world. The purity, benevolence, and justice of this Being are not less perfect, than his physical attributes. Does your reason hesitate a single moment to decide, that such a name cannot, without a crime, be used with levity?

It is impossible, that any doctrine should be so interesting to man, or so interesting in its result, as that of eternal judgment.

There is the greatest impropriety, not to say absurdity, in mingling together trivial and important subjects in common discourse. Suppose a person should habitually contrive to present to your mind, in company with ludicrous or trifling ideas, others, either of a solemn or painful nature, such as that of a dying man, a weeping family, a besieged town, reduced by famine, to the last extremity, or of a ship's crew in expectation of being absorbed in the next series of billows;—three things you would immediately perceive; *first*, a great degree of pain in your own minds, from the concurrence of objects, so dissimilar and opposite; *secondly*, that the person, choosing to unite such objects in his own mind, must possess a kind of horrible insensibility; and *thirdly*, frequently to hear such conversation, and to look on a picture, in which such discordant objects were portrayed, would gradually destroy humane feelings, and deaden the charities of life. But

the profane person does more than this. He unites the idea of God, with ideas, which are common, trifling, and ridiculous. He throws into the same picture the ludicrous occurrences of a day, and the sufferings of eternity. All restraints from vice, arising from belief in God and a retribution, are enfeebled, just in proportion to his success in bringing others to resemble himself. He is answerable, therefore, not only for his own impiety, but for that general immorality, which results from his influence on others. Whether he belongs to a small or a great community,—whether his mind is imbecile or powerful, the tendency of his profaneness is to destroy those principles, on which rest the security and happiness of man in a social state, to annihilate the moral sense, and to render him depraved and wretched in all the stages of his future being.

A further danger, to which youth, associated for literary purposes, are exposed, is that of dissipation. By dissipation I mean waste of time, occasional indolence, suffering the mind to wander from those objects, which ought to confine it, and a criminal indulgence of the appetites. That this is wrong, in a moral or religious view, is too obvious to admit serious doubt. God, who gives and continues human life, requires, that we use it to good purpose,—that we cultivate our mental powers, and

apply them to those objects, for which they are adapted,—for which they were bestowed. He requires, that we govern our appetites and maintain uniform sobriety and temperance.

Nor is it more certain, that every species of dissipation militates with moral duty, than that its effects are unfavourable to the acquirement of knowledge. In proportion, as your intellects are at your own command, in proportion to your power of directing them to what object you please;—the less they are disturbed or obscured by passion or licentiousness; clearness will be acquired to your perception, soundness to your judgment, and strength to your memory. But all indolence and disorder, all indulgence, either of the angry or licentious passions, tend to dissipate the thoughts, and to enfeeble the powers of perceiving and discriminating.

Having mentioned, in general, the dangers, to which you are exposed, I would indicate in a few words, by what means you may be rendered most secure in the midst of them. This security arises from a habit of acting from principle. You well know, that nothing more severe can be said of a man, than that he acts without principle. *Unprincipled* and *worthless* are epithets, which we unite merely for the purpose of expressing the same thing more strongly. We never suppose, that the latter

contains any thing more, than the former. Now, if an unprincipled *man* be worthless, so is an unprincipled *youth*. Nay, there are many men of this description, who, in youth, were not so. Of course, if persons are rendered immoral, in early life, there is reason to apprehend, that, in subsequent years, their profligacy will become preeminent. If acting from principle is so important, let us see what is implied in it.

When we speak of a man, as acting from principle, we do not mean, that human estimation is the rule of his conduct. That the approbation of discerning and good men, is desirable, cannot be questioned. But even their approbation, imperfect as they are, is not your standard. Much less are you so to regard the fluctuating opinion of the majority. If such were your criterion, what is right to-day might be wrong to-morrow. No man, I apprehend, who is conscious of much integrity, or even supposes himself in much repute, would be willing to have it thought, that no higher motive, than the love of popularity, governed his life.

Neither is he to be considered, as acting from principle, whose deportment is governed by present interest. The only occasion, on which such a man can be trusted, is when your own interest and that of the public are, not only consentaneous with his, but

believed by himself to be thus consentaneous. What then are we to say of the man of mere sensibility and good nature? Is he to be considered, as a man of principle? Doubtless these qualities do not entitle him to that honour. His sensibility to one object, may lead him to practise injustice towards another. The good nature of a judge may acquit a culprit, to the disturbance and terror of the public. The man, who has no other guide but his feelings, can never be entitled to general confidence, because we can never know, in what direction these will carry him.

In a principle of honour, you imagine, perhaps, that there is permanence and uniformity. If, by honour, you mean moral rectitude, it is undoubtedly both uniform and permanent. But, if you mean a regard to reputation, it is subject to all the changes of public opinion. And the man, who is thus honourable, stands ready for any crime, as soon as the public sentiment is sufficiently corrupt to approve it.

Independently of our choice,—independently of the choice of angels, or of any being in the universe, there are such things as truth and error, moral rectitude and moral obliquity. The nature of these can neither be altered nor confounded. Should the most elevated of creatures, or even were it pos-

sible, should the Deity himself choose and proceed in opposition to that eternal rectitude, which it is the glory of his character to have maintained, still, that, which is wrong, would never become right; neither would that, which is right, ever become wrong. In truth and morals, there is perfect immutability.

Now he, who acts from principle, has regard to this unchangeable rectitude;—that rule, with which the proceedings of angels and of God are in perpetual unison. By this have been influenced, all, who have *deserved* reputation in this world, or who will *enjoy* it in the next. This will preserve you from indolence, instability, and profaneness, from licentiousness, and dishonour. It will give you confidence before men, and humble hope in the day of final retribution. For though *by the deeds of the law can no flesh living be justified*, it is the gracious establishment of christianity, that the offences of all, who profess this inward rectitude, this holiness of temper, shall be freely pardoned at the day of judgment.

I conclude this lecture in the well known words of Dr. Price; “Virtue is of intrinsic value and of indispensable obligation; not the creature of will, but necessary and immutable; not local and temporary, but of equal extent with the divine mind; not a mode

of sensation, but everlasting truth; not dependant on power, but the guide of all power. Virtue is the foundation of honour and esteem. The use of it is not confined to any one stage of our existence, nor to any particular situation, but reaches through all periods and circumstances of our being. Many of the endowments and talents, which we now possess, and of which we are too apt to be proud, will cease entirely with the present state; but this will be our ornament and dignity in every future state, to which we may be removed. Beauty and wit will die; learning will vanish away, and all the arts of life be soon forgot; but virtue will remain forever.—One virtuous disposition of soul is preferable to the greatest accomplishments and abilities, and of more value, than all the treasures of the world. If you are wise, then, study virtue, and condemn every thing, which comes in competition with it. Remember, that nothing else deserves one anxious thought or wish. Remember, that this alone is honour, glory, wealth, and happiness. Secure this, and you secure every thing: lose this, and all is lost.”





# LETTER,

TO THE STUDENTS OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

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AMHERST, JUNE 12, 1819.

*My dear Young Gentlemen,*

It is impossible, that an occurrence so new, as my absence from college at the commencement of a term, should not be attended with unusual feelings, and those not always of the most pleasant nature. Anxious as I always am for your intellectual and moral improvement, you will easily perceive, that such solicitude cannot be diminished either by reviewing the last term, or by the conscious inability, which I feel, of contributing any thing at present, either to the government or instruction of college.

There are two capacities, in which every member of a public institution ought to consider himself,—I mean that of a *student*, and that of an *accountable being*. Your opportunities for enlarging

the mind, and increasing that intellectual distinction, which God has been pleased to make between human and brutal natures, are numerous and invaluable. By what you are conscious of in yourselves, and by what you observe in others, you perceive how differently these opportunities are improved, and to what different results they eventually lead. You perceive, that residence at college, is, as it respects this world,—as it respects character, *a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death*;—it renders more public your *bad* or your *good* conduct, thereby making your honour or disgrace more extensively known. You are not fully sensible, I am persuaded, how much not only the character of college, but your own individual characters are affected, in view of the public, either by indolence, dissipation, and impiety, or by the opposite virtues.

Reputation and happiness are, indeed, as it respects their nature, distinct; yet is the latter, in no small degree, dependant on the former. Permit me to ask, whether you have not found, either by experience or observation, that your happiness may be very essentially injured or advanced by your own conduct and deportment during the space even of a single term. Have you not observed, that a student may not only very essentially impair his *reputation* in view of his fellow students, and in view of the

government, in a time so short as three months, but that he may make, during that time, fearful inroads upon his own *happiness*? Recollect a single student, closing a college term with happy reflections, who was conscious, that, by associating with the indolent, disreputable, and vicious, he had diminished his taste for study, lost his previous standing in his class, lost the friendship and confidence of the better part of his fellow students, and incurred the displeasure of government? Suppose, that, in addition to all this, he is conscious of new inclinations to vice, a taste for guilty pursuits, a love for drinking and noisy dissipation; suppose, that he feels these propensities to be increasing, his efforts to counteract them ineffectual, and himself becoming more and more the unresisting slave of a vice, which the experience of others has taught him, not only entails everlasting death, but spares not the temporal comforts, the health, or even the life of its votaries.

But, my dear young gentlemen, let me urge you to regard yourselves more distinctly as accountable, immortal beings. How often do you witness facts of such a nature, as show the uncertainty of all human hopes! By a death, which occurred in your near vicinity during the vacation, you have been reminded how inevitable are the arrows of death; with how much certainty they reach the heart,

when sent by the command of a sovereign God ! You see what seeming casualties may suddenly deprive you, first of reason and then of life ! Why, in order to sport with their salvation, will mortals disregard all the facts, presented to their observation, no less than all the remonstrances, which, in scripture, are addressed to their reason, their hopes, and their fears ?

Let me entreat you, young gentlemen, to distinguish the present term by your industry and christian virtue. Do yourselves no injury. Excite no distress and mortification in the breasts of your friends, and of those, who are most anxious for your present honour and everlasting welfare. Consider, that, as God has made you rational creatures,—as such he requires you to live, as such will he reward or punish you through the countless ages of the approaching life.

I hope to be at Brunswick in about ten days : but such is the state of my health, as to render every calculation of this kind extremely precarious : and my language ought to be, *It is the Lord : let him do what seemeth him good.*

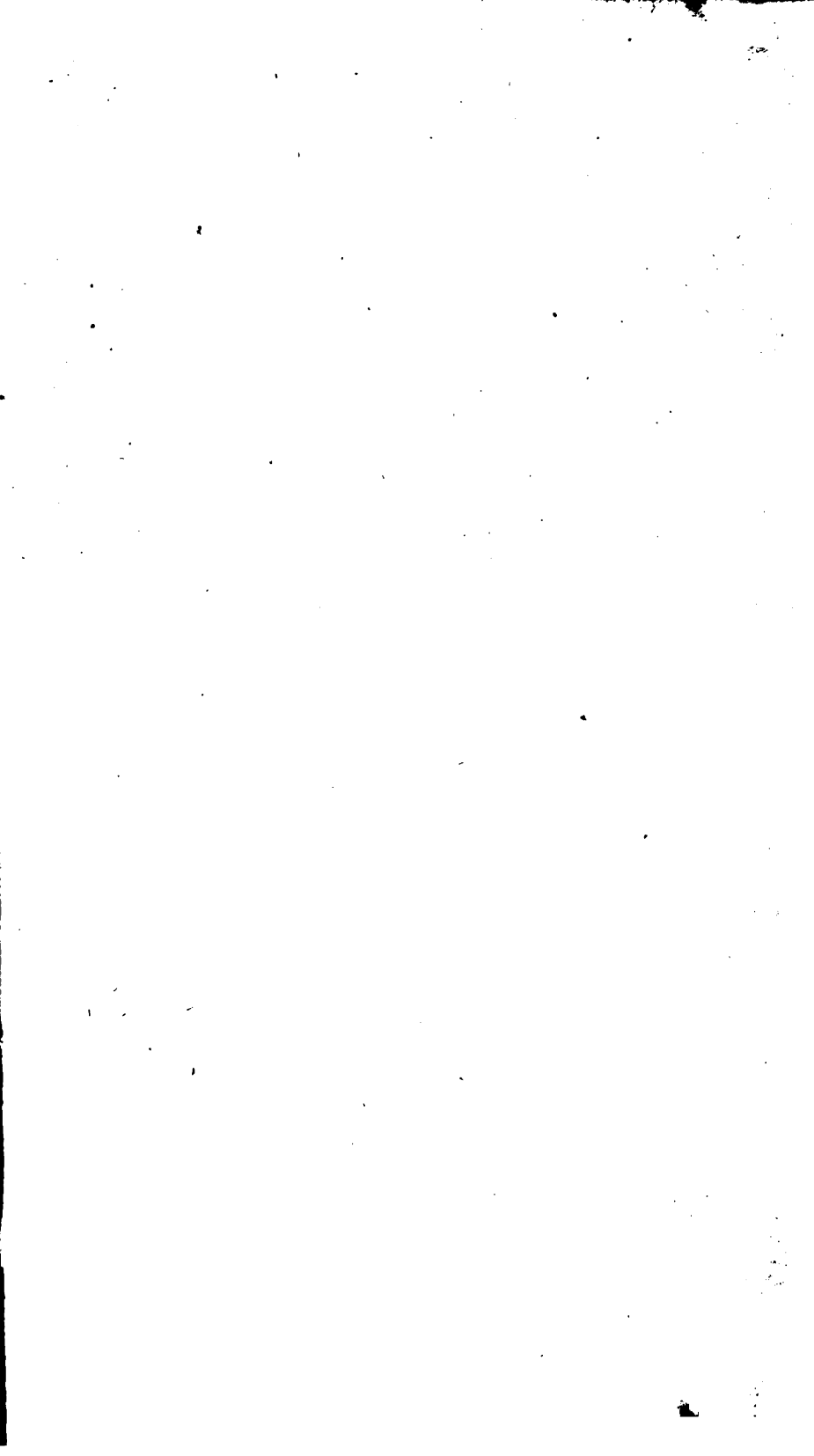
With great affection, I am,

Young Gentlemen, yours, &c.

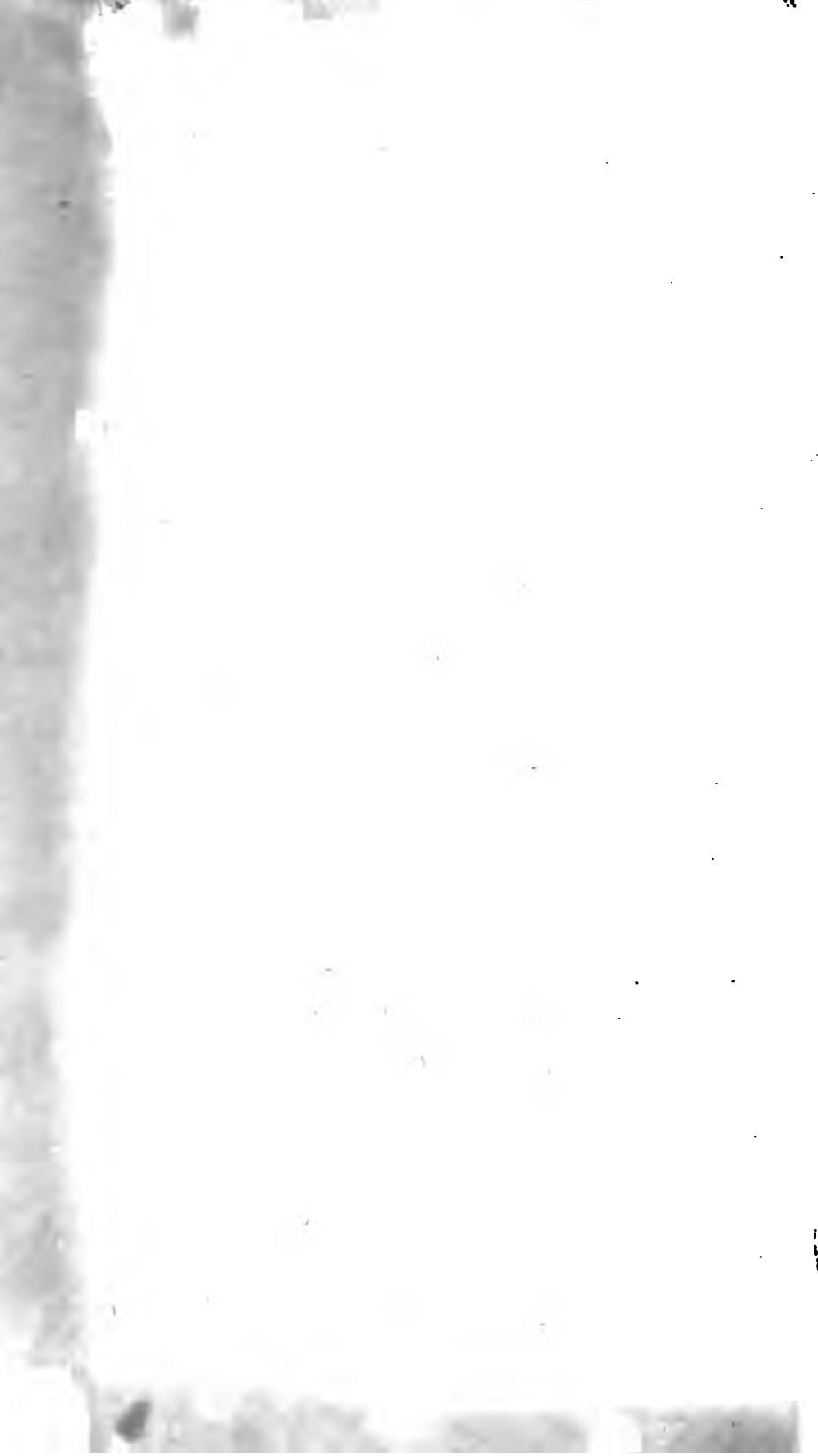
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